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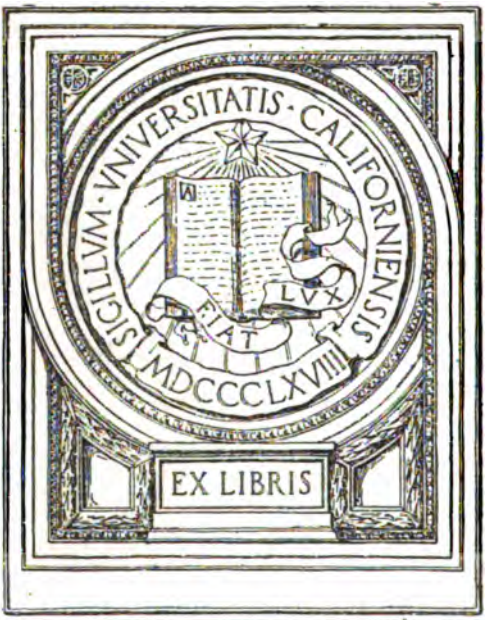

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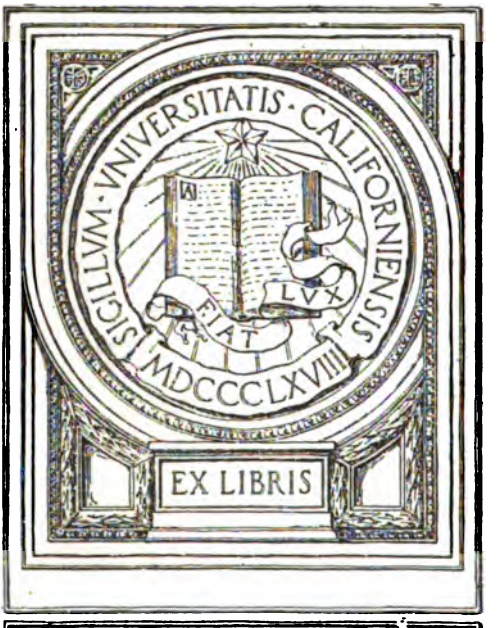

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SHELLEY'S WORKS IN VERSE AND PROSE

VOLUME II

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. . . . those wise and lovely songs
Of fate, and chance, and God, and Chaos old,
And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer
Our solitary twilights, and which charm
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

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THE WORKS

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

IN VERSE AND PROSE

NOW FIRST BROUGHT TOGETHER

WITH MANY PIECES NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED

EDITED

With Prefaces Notes and Appendices

BY

HARRY BUXTON FORMAN

IN EIGHT VOLUMES

Second Volume—Poetry II

LONDON:
REEVES AND TURNER 196 STRAND
1880

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NOTE.

When Shelley sent Peacock his translation of the manuscript detailing the Cenci story, he said that his tragedy was to be published with a print from Guido's portrait of Beatrice. As far as I am aware, this has not until now been done. My friend Mr. W. B. Scott, sympathizing in my desire to put Shelley's wish into effect, even at this late hour, kindly undertook to etch a plate; and the result is the frontispiece of the present volume.

H. B. F.

October, 1876.

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THE CENCI.

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[*The Cenci*, begun at Rome on the 14th of May, 1819, was finished at Villa Valsovano, half way between Leghorn and Monte Nero, about the middle of August, and printed at Leghorn in the same year, though not published in England till the spring of 1820. This first edition is an octavo volume, rather larger than demy, printed on half sheets of paper and folded in four. It consists of title-page, Dedication pp. III to V, Preface pp. VII to XIV, fly-title with *dramatis personæ* on back, and pp. 3 to 104 of text. There is no printer's name on it. The second edition is an ordinary octavo,—with title, 2 pages of dedication, 11 pages of preface, fly-title with *dramatis personæ*, and text pp. 3 to 103. The title-page has an imprint at back, "London: Printed by C. H. Reynell, Broad Street, Golden Square," which is repeated at the end of the book. The title-pages of both editions are reproduced opposite. This is the one work of Shelley's whereof two editions were published during his lifetime; and there is perhaps firmer ground here for a text than in any other of his works. The first edition has a few errors of the press incidental to the Italian compositors' ignorance of English; but there was probably much less deviation from the MS. here than in the works printed in England, because the compositors would not know *how* to deviate; and Shelley's correspondence shews that he bestowed great care on the work. The second edition is far less *suspect* than most of the books printed in England in Shelley's absence, probably because it was printed from a slightly revised copy of the first edition, in which case there would not be the many questionable places that a MS. presents for a printer to exercise his ingenuity on. Still there are very numerous minute variations, in spelling and punctuation; and I suspect comparatively few of these were Shelley's own alterations. A list of errata, which was sent to the publisher after the issue of the first edition, justifies several important variations shewn by the second. This list is now in my possession. I have collated the two editions, following, as a rule, the first, as by far the more characteristic, but adopting, without specification, a few fresh pointings and spellings from the second, where they are decided improvements and commend themselves as authentic, and of course always regarding the list of errata. Variations of pointing affecting the sense are noted, as are also the verbal variations between the two editions; and even the second has as much claim to be considered authentic as any of the other books printed in England while Shelley was in Italy. The names of the speakers, in both first and second editions, stand abbreviated at the commencement of the first line of each speech: as a matter of convenience and perspicuity, I have followed Mrs. Shelley in giving the names in full and placing them over the centre of each speech. I am not aware that the MS. of *The Cenci* is extant.—H. B. F.]

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THE CENCI.

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

By PERCY B. SHELLEY.

ITALY.
PRINTED FOR C. AND J. OLLIER
VERE STREET, BOND STREET.
LONDON.
1819.

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THE CENCI

A TRAGEDY

IN FIVE ACTS

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

SECOND EDITION

LONDON

C AND J OLLIER VERE STREET BOND STREET

1821

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DEDICATION.[1]

TO

LEIGH HUNT, Esq.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I inscribe with your name, from a distant country, and after an absence whose months have seemed years, this the latest of my literary efforts.

Those writings which I have hitherto published, have

[1] In a letter to Leigh Hunt, dated "Livorno, Sept. 3, 1819," forming No. XVII of the "Letters from Italy" published by Mrs. Shelley, the poet says, "I have written something and finished it, different from anything else, and a new attempt for me; and I mean to dedicate it to you. I should not have done so without your approbation, but I asked your picture last night, and it smiled assent. If I did not think it in some degree worthy of you, I would not make you a public offering of it. I expect to have to write to you soon about it. If Ollier is not turned Christian, Jew, or become infected with *the Murrain*, he will publish it. Don't let him be frightened, for it is nothing which, by any courtesy of language, can be termed either moral or immoral." The use of Mr. Murray's name, to compound a punning title for that disease of timorousness so prevalent among the respectable booksellers of Shelley's day, is curious enough. In a letter to Hunt, dated "Pisa, August 26th, 1821," No. LVIII of the "Letters from Italy," there is a reference to Byron's having been loud "in censure of *The Cenci*,"—presumably from an artistic point of view, as Shelley adds, "Certainly if *Marino Faliero* is a Drama, *The Cenci* is not—but that between ourselves." What Shelley thought of the value of his tragedy as such may be judged from the words, in an earlier letter to Hunt,—"totally different from anything you might conjecture that I should write; of a more popular kind; and if anything of mine could deserve attention, of higher claims."

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been little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just. I can also perceive in them the literary defects incidental to youth and impatience; they are dreams of what ought to be, or may be. The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of an instructor, and am content to paint, with such colours as my own heart furnishes, that which has been.

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent and brave; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil; one who knows better how to receive, and how to confer a benefit though he must ever confer far more than he can receive; one of simpler, and, in the highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners I never knew: and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.

In that patient and irreconcilable enmity with domestic and political tyranny and imposture which the tenor of your life has illustrated, and which, had I health and talents, should illustrate mine, let us, comforting each other in our task, live and die.

All happiness attend you!

Your affectionate friend,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Rome,
May 29, 1819.

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PREFACE.

[BY SHELLEY.]

A MANUSCRIPT was communicated to me during my travels in Italy, which was copied from the archives of the Cenci Palace at Rome, and contains a detailed account of the horrors which ended in the extinction of one of the noblest and richest families of that city during the Pontificate of Clement VIII, in the year 1599. The story is, that an old man having spent his life in debauchery and wickedness, conceived at length an implacable hatred towards his children; which shewed itself towards one daughter under the form of an incestuous passion, aggravated by every circumstance of cruelty and violence. This daughter, after long and vain attempts to escape from what she considered a perpetual contamination both of body and mind, at length plotted with her mother-in-law[1] and brother to murder their common tyrant. The young maiden who was urged to this tremendous deed by an impulse which overpowered its horror, was evidently a most gentle and amiable being, a creature formed to adorn and be admired, and thus violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstance[2] and opinion. The

[1] The use of the term *mother-in-law* in its popular but wholly incorrect sense of *step-mother* is curious in so careful a work as *The Cenci*. In the list of *dramatis personæ* and elsewhere, Lucretia is duly described as the step-mother of Cenci's children.

[2] In Mrs. Shelley's editions, *circumstances*. In both Shelley's editions the word is singular, not plural, and I have no doubt it was meant to be singular.

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deed was quickly discovered, and, in spite of the most earnest prayers made to the Pope by the highest persons in Rome, the criminals were put to death. The old man had during his life repeatedly bought his pardon from the Pope for capital crimes of the most enormous and unspeakable kind, at the price of a hundred thousand crowns; the death therefore of his victims can scarcely be accounted for by the love of justice. The Pope, among other motives for severity, probably felt that whoever killed the Count Cenci deprived his treasury of a certain and copious source of revenue.[1] Such a story, if told so as to present to the reader all the feelings of those who once acted it, their hopes and fears, their confidences and misgivings, their various interests, passions and opinions, acting upon and with each other, yet all conspiring to one tremendous end, would be as a light to make apparent some of the most dark and secret caverns of the human heart.

On my arrival at Rome I found that the story of the Cenci was a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathless interest; and that the feelings of the company never failed to incline to a romantic pity for the wrongs, and a passionate exculpation of the horrible deed to which they urged her, who has been mingled two centuries with the common dust. All ranks of people knew the outlines of this history, and participated in the overwhelming interest which it seems to have the magic

[1] The Papal Government formerly took the most extraordinary precautions against the publicity of facts which offer so tragical a demonstration of its own wickedness and weakness; so that the communication of the MS. had become, until very lately, a matter of some difficulty. [SHELLEY'S NOTE, a part of the text in the first edition, but removed to the foot of the page in the second edition, as directed in the list of errata.]

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of exciting in the human heart. I had a copy of Guido's picture of Beatrice which is preserved in the Colonna Palace, and my servant instantly recognized it as the portrait of *La Cenci*.

This national and universal interest which the story produces and has produced for two centuries and among all ranks of people in a great City, where the imagination is kept for ever active and awake, first suggested to me the conception of its fitness for a dramatic purpose. In fact it is a tragedy which has already received from its capacity of awakening and sustaining the sympathy of men, approbation and success. Nothing remained as I imagined, but to clothe it to the apprehensions of my countrymen in such language and action as would bring it home to their hearts. The deepest and the sublimest tragic compositions, King Lear and the two plays in which the tale of Œdipus[1] is told, were stories which already existed in tradition, as matters of popular belief and interest, before Shakspeare and Sophocles made them familiar to the sympathy of all succeeding generations of mankind.

This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous: any thing like a dry exhibition of it on the stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal, and diminish the actual horror of the events, so that the pleasure which arises from the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes may mitigate the pain of the contemplation of the moral deformity from which they spring. There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient

[1] In both Shelley's editions, *Ædipus*.

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to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose. The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching[1] the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind. If dogmas can do more, it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them. Undoubtedly, no person can be truly dishonoured by the act of another; and the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love. Revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better; but she would never have been a tragic character: the few whom such an exhibition would have interested, could never have been sufficiently interested for a dramatic purpose, from the want of finding sympathy in their interest among the mass who surround them. It is in the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge; that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered, consists.

I have endeavoured as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conceptions of right or wrong, false or true: thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into

[1] So in both Shelley's editions; but Mrs. Shelley inserts the word *of* after *teaching*.

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cold impersonations of my own mind. They are represented as Catholics, and as Catholics deeply tinged with religion. To a Protestant apprehension there will appear something unnatural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and men which pervade the tragedy of the Cenci. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in Protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion coexists, as it were, in the mind of an Italian Catholic, with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connexion with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and without any shock to established faith, confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge; never a check. Cenci himself built a chapel in the court of his Palace, and dedicated it to St. Thomas the Apostle, and established masses for the peace of his soul. Thus in the first scene of the fourth act Lucretia's design in exposing herself to the consequences of an expostulation with Cenci after having administered the opiate, was to induce him by

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a feigned tale to confess himself before death; this being esteemed by Catholics as essential to salvation; and she only relinquishes her purpose when she perceives that her perseverance would expose Beatrice to new outrages.

I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature.[1]

In a dramatic composition the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects, I have written more carelessly; that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men,[2] and that our great ancestors the antient English poets are the writers, a study of whom might incite us to do that for our own age which they have done for theirs. But it must be the real language of

[1] An idea in this speech was suggested by a most sublime passage in "El Purgatorio de San Patricio" of Calderon; the only plagiarism which I have intentionally committed in the whole piece. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

[2] There is a full-stop at *men* in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions.

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men in general and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong. So much for what I have attempted; I need not be assured that success is a very different matter; particularly for one whose attention has but newly been awakened to the study of dramatic literature.[1]

I endeavoured whilst at Rome to observe such monuments of this story as might be accessible to a stranger. The portrait of Beatrice at the Colonna[2] Palace is admirable[3] as a work of art: it was taken by Guido during her confinement in prison. But it is most interesting as a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of Nature. There is a fixed and pale composure upon the features: she seems sad and stricken down in spirit, yet the despair thus expressed is lightened by the patience of gentleness. Her head is bound with folds of white drapery from which the yellow strings of her golden hair escape, and fall about her neck. The moulding of her face is exquisitely delicate; the eyebrows are distinct and arched: the lips have that permanent meaning of imagination and sensibility which suffering has not repressed and which it seems as if death scarcely could extinguish. Her

[1] Mr. Garnett (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 81) gives the following as "a note on the original MS. of the preface" to *The Cenci*: "That famous passage in that pathetic sonnet in which, addressing a dear friend, he [Shakespeare] complains of his own situation as an actor, and says that his nature is (I quote from memory)

'Subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.'

Observe these images, how simple they are, and yet animated with what intense poetry and passion." I presume this note to have been originally meant to form some part of the passage in the text on dramatic style.

[2] Mr. Rossetti notes that it is now at the Barberini Palace.

[3] In the first edition, *most admirable*. The word *most* is omitted in the second edition, but restored by Mrs. Shelley, although its omission was directed in the list of errata. Probably Shelley struck it out on account of its recurrence immediately afterwards, in *most interesting*.

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forehead is large and clear; her eyes which we are told were remarkable for their vivacity, are swollen with weeping and lustreless, but beautifully tender and serene. In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow are inexpressibly pathetic. Beatrice Cenci appears to have been one of those rare persons in whom energy and gentleness dwell together without destroying one another: her nature was simple and profound. The crimes and miseries in which she was an actor and a sufferer are as the mask and the mantle in which circumstances clothed her for her impersonation on the scene of the world.

The Cenci Palace is of great extent; and though in part modernized, there yet remains a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture in the same state as during the dreadful scenes which are the subject of this tragedy. The Palace is situated in an obscure corner of Rome, near the quarter of the Jews, and from the upper windows you see the immense ruins of Mount Palatine half hidden under their profuse overgrowth of trees. There is a court in one part of the Palace (perhaps that in which Cenci built the Chapel to St. Thomas), supported by granite columns and adorned with antique friezes of fine workmanship, and built up, according to the antient Italian fashion, with balcony over balcony of open-work. One of the gates of the Palace formed of immense stones and leading through a passage, dark and lofty and opening into gloomy subterranean chambers, struck me particularly.

Of the Castle of Petrella,[1] I could obtain no further information than that which is to be found in the manuscript.

[1] Mr. Rossetti says, "This castle is near Aquila, close to the frontier of the Papal States." The MS. was not printed with *The Cenci*, as Shelley intended.

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THE CENCI.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COUNT FRANCESCO CENCI.

GIACOMO, BERNARDO, } his Sons.

CARDINAL CAMILLO.

ORSINO, a Prelate.

SAVELLA, the Pope's Legate.

OLIMPIO, MARZIO, } Assassins.

ANDREA, Servant to Cenci.

Nobles—Judges—Guards—Servants.

LUCRETIA, Wife of Cenci, and Step-mother of his children.

BEATRICE, his Daughter.

The SCENE lies principally in Rome, but changes during the fourth Act to Petrella, a castle among the Apulian Apennines.

TIME. During the Pontificate of Clement VIII.

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THE CENCI.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

AN APARTMENT IN THE CENCI PALACE. ENTER COUNT CENCI, AND CARDINAL CAMILLO.

CAMILLO.

THAT matter of the murder is hushed up
If you consent to yield his Holiness
Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate.—
It needed all my interest in the conclave
To bend him to this point: he said that you
Bought perilous impunity with your gold;
That crimes like yours if once or twice compounded
Enriched the Church, and respited from hell
An erring soul which might repent and live:—
But that the glory and the interest
Of the high throne he fills, little consist
With making it a daily mart of guilt
As[1] manifold and hideous as the deeds
Which you scarce hide from men's revolted eyes.

[1] *So* in the first edition; but *As* is substituted in the second, in accordance with the list of errata. In Mrs. Shelley's and Mr. Rossetti's editions, *So* is restored.

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CENCI.

The third of my possessions—let it go!
Aye, I once heard the nephew of the Pope
Had sent his architect to view the ground,
Meaning to build a villa on my vines
The next time I compounded with his uncle:
I little thought he should outwit me so!
Henceforth no witness—not the lamp—shall see
That which the vassal threatened to divulge
Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward.
The deed he saw could not have rated higher
Than[1] his most worthless life:—it angers me!
Respited me[2] from Hell!—So may the Devil
Respite their souls from Heaven. No doubt Pope Clement,
And his most charitable nephews, pray
That the Apostle Peter and the saints
Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy
Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length of days
Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards
Of their revenue.—But much yet remains
To which they shew no title.

CAMILLO.

Oh, Count Cenci!
So much that thou mightst[3] honourably live

[1] *That* is the word here in both Shelley's editions: in all others known to me we read *Than*; and it seems probable that this was a correction of Shelley's, given by Mrs. Shelley. Supposing *That* to be right, we have the very doubtful sense,—"the deed could not have increased the value of that most worthless life of his"; but reading *Than*, we get "the deed could not have been of higher value than his life,"—meaning, of course, that Cenci would not have had to pay more than his "fief beyond the Pincian," if he had let the vassal divulge the crime, instead of murdering him.

[2] The word *me* is omitted from the first edition, and all others, I believe, except the second and Mr. Rossetti's, which accord with the list of errata.

[3] Mr. Rossetti prints *you might* for *thou mightst*, on the ground that Shelley has no rule as to which form he adopts,—and that in the present speech we have *thou* &c. four times and *you* &c. fourteen. It should be borne in mind that for a poet there are rules of sound quite as important as rules of grammar; and only by a large

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And reconcile thyself with thine own heart
And with thy God, and with the offended world.
How hideously look deeds of lust and blood
Thro' those snow white and venerable hairs!—
Your children should be sitting round you now,
But that you fear to read upon their looks
The shame and misery you have written there.
Where is your wife? Where is your gentle daughter?
Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things else
Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you.
Why is she barred from all society
But her own strange and uncomplaining wrongs?
Talk with me, Count,—you know I mean you well.
I stood beside your dark and fiery youth
Watching its bold and bad career, as men
Watch meteors, but it vanished not—I marked
Your desperate and remorseless manhood; now
Do I behold you in dishonoured age
Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes.
Yet I have ever hoped you would amend,
And in that hope have saved your life three times.

CENCI.

For which Aldobrandino owes you now
My fief beyond the Pincian.—Cardinal,
One thing, I pray you, recollect henceforth,
And so we shall converse with less restraint.
A man you knew spoke of my wife and daughter—
He was accustomed to frequent my house;
So the next day *his* wife and daughter came
And asked if I had seen him; and I smiled:
I think they never saw him any more.

concession can an editor claim the right to "reform" a text as Mr. Rossetti does in this and other similar instances in *The Cenci*. Perhaps it will suffice to record this view once for all without referring to the other instances.

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CAMILLO.

Thou execrable man, beware!—

CENCI.

Of thee?

Nay this is idle:—We should know each other.
As to my character for what men call crime
Seeing I please my senses as I list,
And vindicate that right with force or guile,
It is a public matter, and I care not
If I discuss it with you. I may speak
Alike to you and my own conscious heart—
For you give out that you have half reformed me,
Therefore strong vanity will keep you silent
If fear should not; both will, I do not doubt.
All men delight in sensual luxury,
All men enjoy revenge; and most exult
Over the tortures they can never feel—
Flattering their secret peace with others'[1] pain.
But I delight in nothing else. I love
The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,
When this shall be another's, and that mine.
And I have no remorse and little fear,
Which are, I think, the checks of other men.
This mood has grown upon me, until now
Any design my captious fancy makes
The picture of its wish, and it forms none
But such as men like you would start to know,
Is as my natural food and rest debarred
Until it be accomplished.

CAMILLO.

Art thou not
Most miserable?

[1] So in the second edition: in the first, *other's*.

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CENCI.

Why, miserable?—
No.—I am what your theologians call
Hardened;—which they must be in impudence,
So to revile a man's peculiar taste.
True, I was happier than I am, while yet
Manhood remained to act the thing I thought;
While lust was sweeter than revenge; and now
Invention palls:—Aye, we must all grow old—
And but that there yet remains a deed to act[1]
Whose horror might make sharp an appetite
Duller than mine—I'd do,—I know not what.
When I was young I thought of nothing else
But pleasure; and I fed on honey sweets:
Men, by St. Thomas! cannot live like bees,
And I grew tired:—yet, till I killed a foe,
And heard his groans, and heard his children's groans,
Knew I not what delight was else on earth,
Which now delights me little. I the rather
Look on such pangs as terror ill conceals,
The dry fixed eyeball; the pale quivering lip,
Which tell me that the spirit weeps within
Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ.
I rarely kill the body, which preserves,
Like a strong prison, the soul within my power,
Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear
For hourly pain.

CAMILLO.

Hell's most abandoned fiend

[1] In the second edition this line reads as in the text. In the first it is—

But that there yet remains &c.

This reading is followed by Mrs. Shelley and Mr. Rossetti; but the insertion of the word *and* is directed in the list of errata: it certainly improves the sense, though, for the sake of the rhythm, I should have expected the omission of *that* or *yet*, of which the list says nothing.

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Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,
Speak to his heart as now you speak to me;
I thank my God that I believe you not.

Enter ANDREA.

ANDREA.

My Lord, a gentleman from Salamanca
Would speak with you.

CENCI.

Bid him attend me in the grand saloon.

(*Exit* ANDREA.)

CAMILLO.

Farewell; and I will pray
Almighty God that thy false, impious words
Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee.

(*Exit* CAMILLO.)

CENCI.

The third of my possessions! I must use
Close husbandry, or gold, the old man's sword,
Falls from my withered hand. But yesterday
There came an order from the Pope to make
Fourfold provision for my cursèd sons;
Whom I had[1] sent from Rome to Salamanca,
Hoping some accident might cut them off;
And meaning if I could to starve them there.
I pray thee, God, send some quick death upon them!
Bernardo and my wife could not be worse
If dead and damned:—then, as to Beatrice—

(*looking around him suspiciously*)

[1] This word is *have* in the first edition, and in those of Mrs. Shelley; but *had* is substituted in the second edition, as directed in the list of errata.

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I think they cannot hear me at that door;
What if they should? And yet I need not speak
Though the heart triumphs with itself in words.
O, thou most silent air, that shalt[1] not hear
What now I think! Thou, pavement, which I tread
Towards her chamber,—let your echoes talk
Of my imperious step scorning surprise,
But not of my intent!—Andrea!

Enter ANDREA.

ANDREA.

My lord?

CENCI.

Bid Beatrice attend me in her chamber
This evening:—no, at midnight and alone.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

A GARDEN OF THE CENCI PALACE. ENTER BEATRICE AND ORSINO, AS IN CONVERSATION.

BEATRICE.

Pervert not truth,
Orsino. You remember where we held
That conversation;—nay, we see the spot
Even from this cypress;—two long years are past
Since, on an April midnight, underneath
The moonlight ruins of mount Palatine,
I did confess to you my secret mind.

[1] *Shall* in the first edition; *shalt* in the second, as in the list of errata.

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ORSINO.

You said you loved me then.

BEATRICE.

You are a Priest,
Speak to me not of love.

ORSINO.

I may obtain
The dispensation of the Pope to marry.
Because I am a Priest do you believe
Your image, as the hunter some struck deer,
Follows me not whether I wake or sleep?

BEATRICE.

As I have said, speak to me not of love;
Had you a dispensation I have not;
Nor will I leave this home of misery
Whilst my poor Bernard, and that gentle lady
To whom I owe life, and these virtuous thoughts,
Must suffer what I still have strength to share.
Alas, Orsino! All the love that once
I felt for you, is turned to bitter pain.
Our's was a youthful contract, which you first
Broke, by assuming vows no Pope will loose.
And thus[1] I love you still, but holily,
Even as a sister or a spirit might;
And so I swear a cold fidelity.
And it is well perhaps we shall not marry.
You have a sly, equivocating vein
That suits me not.—Ah, wretched that I am!
Where shall I turn? Even now you look on me

[1] In the first edition we have *yet I love you still*, but the second, carrying out the direction of the list of errata, reads *thus I love you still*,—a reading adopted by Mrs. Shelley, but dropped by Mr. Rossetti in favour of the original reading.

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As you were not my friend, and as if you
Discovered that I thought so, with false smiles
Making my true suspicion seem your wrong.
Ah! No, forgive me; sorrow makes me seem
Sterner than else my nature might have been;
I have a weight of melancholy thoughts,
And they forbode,—but what can they forbode
Worse than I now endure?

ORSINO.

All will be well.
Is the petition yet prepared? You know
My zeal for all you wish, sweet Beatrice;
Doubt not but I will use my utmost skill
So that the Pope attend to your complaint.

BEATRICE.

Your zeal for all I wish;—Ah me, you are cold!
Your utmost skill . . . speak but one word . . .
(*aside*) Alas!
Weak and deserted creature that I am,
Here I stand bickering with my only friend!
(*To* ORSINO)
This night my father gives a sumptuous feast,
Orsino; he has heard some happy news
From Salamanca, from my brothers there,
And with this outward shew of love he mocks
His inward hate. 'Tis bold hypocrisy,
For he would gladlier celebrate their deaths,
Which I have heard him pray for on his knees:
Great God! that such a father should be mine!
But there is mighty preparation made,
And all our kin, the Cenci, will be there,
And all the chief nobility of Rome.
And he has bidden me and my pale Mother

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Attire ourselves in festival array.
Poor lady! She expects some happy change
In his dark spirit from this act; I none.
At supper I will give you the petition:
Till when—farewell.

ORSINO.

Farewell.

(*Exit* BEATRICE.)

I know the Pope
Will ne'er absolve me from my priestly vow
But by absolving me from the revenue
Of many a wealthy see; and, Beatrice,
I think to win thee at an easier rate.
Nor shall he read her eloquent petition:
He might bestow her on some poor relation
Of his sixth cousin, as he did her sister,
And I should be debarred from all access.
Then as to what she suffers from her father,
In all this there is much exaggeration:—
Old men are testy and will have their way;
A man may stab his enemy, or his vassal,[1]
And live a free life as to wine or women,
And with a peevish temper may return
To a dull home, and rate his wife and children;
Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny.
I shall be well content if on my conscience
There rest no heavier sin than what they suffer
From the devices of my love—A net
From which she shall escape not. Yet I fear
Her subtle mind, her awe-inspiring gaze,
Whose beams anatomize me nerve by nerve

[1] In the first edition we read *slave*,—in the second, which is followed by Mrs. Shelley, *vassal*. This correction, from the list of errata, was doubtless made because *slave* was wrongly used with regard to the state of society depicted.

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And lay me bare, and make me blush to see
My hidden thoughts.—Ah, no! A friendless girl
Who clings to me, as to her only hope:—
I were a fool, not less than if a panther
Were panic-stricken by the antelope's eye,
If she escape me.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE III.

A MAGNIFICENT HALL IN THE CENCI PALACE. A BANQUET. ENTER CENCI, LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, ORSINO, CAMILLO, NOBLES.

CENCI.

Welcome, my friends and kinsmen; welcome ye,
Princes and Cardinals, pillars of the church,
Whose presence honours our festivity.
I have too long lived like an anchorite,
And in my absence from your merry meetings
An evil word is gone abroad of me;
But I do hope that you, my noble friends,
When you have shared the entertainment here,
And heard the pious cause for which 'tis given,
And we have pledged a health or two together,
Will think me flesh and blood as well as you;
Sinful indeed, for Adam made all so,
But tender-hearted, meek and pitiful.

FIRST GUEST.

In truth, my Lord, you seem too light of heart,
Too sprightly and companionable a man,
To act the deeds that rumour pins on you.

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(*To his companion*)

I never saw such blithe and open cheer
In any eye!

SECOND GUEST.

Some most desired event,
In which we all demand a common joy,
Has brought us hither; let us hear it, Count.

CENCI.

It is indeed a most desired event.
If when a parent from a parent's heart
Lifts from this earth to the great father of all
A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep,
And when he rises up from dreaming it;
One supplication, one desire, one hope,
That he would grant a wish for his two sons,
Even all that he demands in their regard—
And suddenly beyond his dearest hope,
It is accomplished, he should then rejoice,
And call his friends and kinsmen to a feast,
And task their love to grace his merriment,
Then honour me thus far—for I am he.

BEATRICE (*to Lucretia*).

Great God! How horrible! Some dreadful ill
Must have befallen my brothers.

LUCRETIA.

Fear not, Child,
He speaks too frankly.

BEATRICE.

Ah! My blood runs cold.

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I fear that wicked laughter round his eye,
Which wrinkles up the skin even to the hair.

CENCI.

Here are the letters brought from Salamanca;
Beatrice, read them to your mother. God!
I thank thee! In one night didst thou perform,
By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought.
My disobedient and rebellious sons
Are dead!—Why dead!—What means this change of cheer?
You hear me not, I tell you they are dead;
And they will need no food or raiment more:
The tapers that did light them the dark way
Are their last cost. The Pope, I think, will not
Expect I should maintain them in their coffins.
Rejoice with me—my heart is wondrous glad.

BEATRICE.

(*Lucretia sinks, half fainting; Beatrice supports her.*)

It is not true!—Dear lady, pray look up.
Had it been true, there is a God in Heaven,
He would not live to boast of such a boon.
Unnatural man, thou knowest that it is false.

CENCI.

Aye, as the word of God; whom here I call
To witness that I speak the sober truth;—
And whose most favouring Providence was shewn
Even in the manner of their deaths. For Rocco
Was kneeling at the mass, with sixteen others,
When the church fell and crushed him to a mummy,
The rest escaped unhurt. Cristofano
Was stabbed in error by a jealous man,
Whilst she he loved was sleeping with his rival;

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All in the self-same hour of the same night;
Which shews that Heaven has special care of me.
I beg those friends who love me, that they mark
The day a feast upon their calendars.
It was the twenty-seventh of December:
Aye, read the letters if you doubt my oath.

(*The assembly appears confused; several of the guests rise.*)

FIRST GUEST.

Oh, horrible! I will depart.—

SECOND GUEST.

And I.—

THIRD GUEST.

No, stay!
I do believe it is some jest; tho' faith!
'Tis mocking us somewhat too solemnly.
I think his son has married the Infanta,
Or found a mine of gold in El dorado;
'Tis but to season some such news; stay, stay!
I see 'tis only raillery by his smile.

CENCI.

(*filling a bowl of wine, and lifting it up*)

Oh, thou bright wine whose purple splendour leaps
And bubbles gaily in this golden bowl
Under the lamp-light, as my spirits do,
To hear the death of my accursèd sons!
Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood,
Then would I taste thee like a sacrament,
And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell,
Who, if a father's curses, as men say,
Climb with swift wings after their children's souls,

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And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,
Now triumphs in my triumph!—But thou art
Superfluous; I have drunken deep of joy,
And I will taste no other wine to-night.
Here, Andrea! Bear the bowl around.

A GUEST (*rising*).

Thou wretch!

Will none among this noble company
Check the abandoned villain?

CAMILLO.

For God's sake
Let me dismiss the guests! You are insane,
Some ill will come of this.

SECOND GUEST.

Seize, silence him!

FIRST GUEST.

I will!

THIRD GUEST.

And I!

CENCI.

(*Addressing those who rise with a threatening gesture*)

Who moves? Who speaks?

(*Turning to the Company*)

'tis nothing,
Enjoy yourselves.—Beware![1] For my revenge
Is as the sealed commission of a king

[1] Although there is no stage direction to indicate a second change of attitude here, we are obviously to understand some such words as *again addressing those who had risen.*

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That kills, and none dare name the murderer.

(*The Banquet is broken up; several of the Guests are departing.*)

BEATRICE.

I do entreat you, go not, noble guests;
What, although tyranny and impious hate
Stand sheltered by a father's hoary hair?
What, if 'tis he who clothed us in these limbs
Who tortures them, and triumphs? What, if we,
The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh,
His children and his wife, whom he is bound
To love and shelter? Shall we therefore find
No refuge in this merciless wide world?
Oh, think what deep wrongs must have blotted out
First love, then reverence in a child's prone mind,
Till it thus vanquish shame and fear! O, think!
I have borne much, and kissed the sacred hand
Which crushed us to the earth, and thought its stroke
Was perhaps some paternal chastisement!
Have excused much, doubted; and when no doubt
Remained, have sought by patience, love and tears
To soften him, and when this could not be
I have knelt down through the long sleepless nights
And lifted up to God, the father of all,
Passionate prayers: and when these were not heard
I have still borne,—until I meet you here,
Princes and kinsmen, at this hideous feast
Given at my brothers' deaths. Two yet remain,
His wife remains and I, whom if ye save not,
Ye may soon share such merriment again
As fathers make over their children's graves.
Oh! Prince Colonna, thou art our near kinsman,
Cardinal, thou art the Pope's chamberlain,
Camillo, thou art chief justiciary,
Take us away!

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CENCI.

(*He has been conversing with Camillo during the first part of Beatrice's speech; he hears the conclusion, and now advances.*)

I hope my good friends here
Will think of their own daughters—or perhaps
Of their own throats—before they lend an ear
To this wild girl.

BEATRICE.

(*Not noticing the words of Cenci.*)

Dare no[1] one look on me?
None answer? Can one tyrant overbear
The sense of many best and wisest men?
Or is it that I sue not in some form
Of scrupulous law, that ye deny my suit?
Oh, God! That I were buried with my brothers!
And that the flowers of this departed spring
Were fading on my grave! And that my father
Were celebrating now one feast for all!

CAMILLO.

A bitter wish for one so young and gentle;
Can we do nothing?

COLONNA.

Nothing that I see.
Count Cenci were a dangerous enemy:
Yet I would second any one.

A CARDINAL.

And I.

[1] The first edition reads *dare not one*; but the list of errata substitutes *no* for *not*, a correction duly made in the second edition and maintained by Mrs. Shelley.

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CENCI.

Retire to your chamber, insolent girl!

BEATRICE.

Retire thou impious man! Aye hide thyself
Where never eye can look upon thee more!
Wouldst thou have honour and obedience
Who art a torturer? Father, never dream
Though thou mayst overbear this company,
But ill must come of ill.—Frown not on me!
Haste, hide thyself, lest with avenging looks
My brothers' ghosts should hunt thee from thy seat!
Cover thy face from every living eye,
And start if thou but hear a human step:
Seek out some dark and silent corner, there,
Bow thy white head before offended God,
And we will kneel around, and fervently
Pray that he pity both ourselves and thee.

CENCI.

My friends, I do lament this insane girl
Has spoilt the mirth of our festivity.
Good night, farewell; I will not make you longer
Spectators of our dull domestic quarrels.
Another time.—

(*Exeunt all but* CENCI *and* BEATRICE.)

My brain is swimming round;
Give me a bowl of wine!
(*To Beatrice*) Thou painted viper!
Beast that thou art! Fair and yet terrible!
I know a charm shall make thee meek and tame,
Now get thee from my sight!

(*Exit* BEATRICE.)

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Here, Andrea,
Fill up this goblet with Greek wine. I said
I would not drink this evening; but I must;
For, strange to say, I feel my spirits fail
With thinking what I have decreed to do.—
(*Drinking the wine*)
Be thou the resolution of quick youth
Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern,
And age's firm, cold, subtle villainy;
As if thou wert indeed my children's blood
Which I did thirst to drink! The charm works well;
It must be done; it shall be done, I swear!
(*Exit.*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

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ACT II.

SCENE I.

AN APARTMENT IN THE CENCI PALACE. ENTER LUCRETIA AND BERNARDO.

LUCRETIA.

Weep not, my gentle boy; he struck but me
Who have borne deeper wrongs. In truth, if he
Had killed me, he had done a kinder deed.
O, God Almighty, do thou look upon us,
We have no other friend but only thee!
Yet weep not; though I love you as my own,
I am not your true mother.

BERNARDO.

Oh more, more,
Than ever mother was to any child,
That have you been to me! Had he not been
My father, do you think that I should weep?

LUCRETIA.

Alas! Poor boy, what else couldst thou have done?

Enter BEATRICE.

BEATRICE (*In a hurried voice*).

Did he pass this way? Have you seen him, brother?
Ah! No, that is his step upon the stairs;

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'Tis nearer now; his hand is on the door;
Mother, if I to thee have ever been
A duteous child, now save me! Thou, great God,
Whose image upon earth a father is,
Dost thou indeed abandon me? He comes;
The door is opening now; I see his face;
He frowns on others, but he smiles on me,
Even as he did after the feast last night.

Enter a Servant.

Almighty God, how merciful thou art!
'Tis but Orsino's servant.—Well, what news?

SERVANT.

My master bids me say, the Holy Father
Has sent back your petition thus unopened.
(*Giving a paper*)
And he demands at what hour 'twere secure
To visit you again?

LUCRETIA.

At the Ave Mary.
(*Exit Servant.*)
So, daughter, our last hope has failed; Ah me!
How pale you look; you tremble, and you stand
Wrapped in some fixed and fearful meditation,
As if one thought were over strong for you:
Your eyes have a chill glare; O, dearest child!
Are you gone mad? If not, pray speak to me.

BEATRICE.

You see I am not mad; I speak to you.

LUCRETIA.

You talked of something that your father did

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After that dreadful feast? Could it be worse
Than when he smiled, and cried, My sons are dead!
And every one looked in his neighbour's face
To see if others were as white as he?
At the first word he spoke I felt the blood
Rush to my heart, and fell into a trance;
And when it past I sat all weak and wild;
Whilst you alone stood up, and with strong words
Checked his unnatural pride; and I could see
The devil was rebuked that lives in him.
Until this hour thus have you ever stood
Between us and your father's moody wrath
Like a protecting presence: your firm mind
Has been our only refuge and defence:
What can have thus subdued it? What can now
Have given you that cold melancholy look,
Succeeding to your unaccustomed fear?

BEATRICE.

What is it that you say? I was just thinking
'Twere better not to struggle any more.
Men, like my father, have been dark and bloody,
Yet never—O! Before worse comes of it
'Twere wise to die: it ends in that at last.

LUCRETIA.

Oh, talk not so, dear child! Tell me at once
What did your father do or say to you?
He stayed not after that accursèd feast
One moment in your chamber.—Speak to me.

BERNARDO.

Oh, sister, sister, prithee, speak to us!

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BEATRICE.

(*Speaking very slowly with a forced calmness*)

It was one word, Mother, one little word;
One look, one smile. (*wildly*)
Oh! He has trampled me
Under his feet, and made the blood stream down
My pallid cheeks. And he has given us all
Ditch water, and the fever-stricken flesh
Of buffaloes, and bade us eat or starve,
And we have eaten.—He has made me look
On my beloved Bernardo, when the rust
Of heavy chains has gangrened his sweet limbs,
And I have never yet despaired—but now!
What could I say?
(*recovering herself.*)
Ah! No, 'tis nothing new.
The sufferings we all share have made me wild:
He only struck and cursed me as he passed;
He said, he looked, he did;—nothing at all
Beyond his wont, yet it disordered me.
Alas! I am forgetful of my duty,
I should preserve my senses for your sake.

LUCRETIA.

Nay, Beatrice; have courage my sweet girl,
If any one despairs it should be I
Who loved him once, and now must live with him
Till God in pity call for him or me.
For you may, like your sister, find some husband,
And smile, years hence, with children round your knees;
Whilst I, then dead, and all this hideous coil
Shall be remembered only as a dream.

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BEATRICE.

Talk not to me, dear lady, of a husband.
Did you not nurse me when my mother died?
Did you not shield me and that dearest boy?
And had we any other friend but you
In infancy, with gentle words and looks,
To win our father not to murder us?
And shall I now desert you? May the ghost
Of my dead Mother plead against my soul
If I abandon her who filled the place
She left, with more, even, than a mother's love!

BERNARDO.

And I am of my sister's mind. Indeed
I would not leave you in this wretchedness,
Even though the Pope should make me free to live
In some blithe place, like others of my age,
With sports, and delicate food, and the fresh air.
Oh, never think that I will leave you, Mother!

LUCRETIA.

My dear, dear children!

Enter CENCI, *suddenly.*

CENCI.

What, Beatrice here!
Come hither!
(*she shrinks back, and covers her face*)
Nay, hide not your face, 'tis fair;
Look up! Why, yesternight you dared to look
With disobedient insolence upon me,
Bending a stern and an inquiring brow
On what I meant; whilst I then sought to hide
That which I came to tell you—but in vain.

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BEATRICE.

(*Wildly, staggering towards the door.*)

Oh, that the earth would gape! Hide me, oh God!

CENCI.

Then it was I whose inarticulate words
Fell from my lips, and[1] who with tottering steps
Fled from your presence, as you now from mine.
Stay, I command you—from this day and hour
Never again, I think, with fearless eye,
And brow superior, and unaltered cheek,
And that lip made for tenderness or scorn,
Shalt thou strike dumb the meanest of mankind;
Me least of all. Now get thee to thy chamber!
Thou too, loathed image of thy cursèd mother,

(*to* BERNARDO)

Thy milky, meek face makes me sick with hate!

(*Exeunt* BEATRICE *and* BERNARDO.)

(*Aside.*) So much has past between us as must make
Me bold, her fearful.—'Tis an awful thing
To touch such mischief as I now conceive:
So men sit shivering on the dewy bank,
And try the chill stream with their feet; once in . . .
How the delighted spirit pants for joy!

LUCRETIA.

(*Advancing timidly towards him*)

Oh, husband! Pray forgive poor Beatrice,
She meant not any ill.

[1] The word *and* is in both Shelley's editions, not absent from the second as would be inferred from Mr. Swinburne's note on the passage at p. 202 of his *Essays and Studies*. Mrs. Shelley drops the word out; and Mr. Rossetti restores it.

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CENCI.

Nor you perhaps?
Nor that young imp, whom you have taught by rote
Parricide with his alphabet? Nor Giacomo?
Nor those two most unnatural sons, who stirred
Enmity up against me with the Pope?
Whom in one night merciful God cut off:
Innocent lambs! They thought not any ill.
You were not here conspiring? You said nothing
Of how I might be dungeoned as a madman;
Or be condemned to death for some offence,
And you would be the witnesses?—This failing,
How just it were to hire assassins, or
Put sudden poison in my evening drink?
Or smother me when overcome by wine?
Seeing we had no other judge but God,
And he had sentenced me, and there were none
But you to be the executioners
Of his decree enregistered in heaven?
Oh, no! You said not this?

LUCRETIA.

So help me God,
I never thought the things you charge me with!

CENCI.

If you dare speak that wicked lie again
I'll kill you. What! It was not by your counsel
That Beatrice disturbed the feast last night?
You did not hope to stir some enemies
Against me, and escape, and laugh to scorn
What every nerve of you now trembles at?
You judged that men were bolder than they are;
Few dare to stand between their grave and me.

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LUCRETIA.

Look not so dreadfully! By my salvation
I knew not aught that Beatrice designed;
Nor do I think she designed any thing
Until she heard you talk of her dead brothers.

CENCI.

Blaspheming liar! You are damned for this!
But I will take you where you may persuade
The stones you tread on to deliver you:
For men shall there be none but those who dare
All things—not question that which I command.
On Wednesday next I shall set out: you know
That savage rock, the Castle of Petrella:
'Tis safely walled, and moated round about:
Its dungeons underground, and its thick towers
Never told tales; though they have heard and seen
What might make dumb things speak.—Why do you linger?
Make speediest preparation for the journey!

(*Exit* LUCRETIA.)

The all-beholding sun yet shines; I hear
A busy stir of men about the streets;
I see the bright sky through the window panes:
It is a garish, broad, and peering day;
Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears,
And every little corner, nook and hole
Is penetrated with the insolent light.
Come darkness! Yet, what is the day to me?
And wherefore should I wish for night, who do
A deed which shall confound both night and day?
'Tis she shall grope through a bewildering mist
Of horror: if there be a sun in heaven
She shall not dare to look upon its beams;
Nor feel its warmth. Let her then wish for night;

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The act I think shall soon extinguish all
For me: I bear a darker deadlier gloom
Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air,
Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud,
In which I walk secure and unbeheld
Towards my purpose.—Would that it were done!

(*Exit.*)

SCENE II.

A CHAMBER IN THE VATICAN. ENTER CAMILLO AND GIACOMO, IN CONVERSATION.

CAMILLO.

There is an obsolete and doubtful law
By which you might obtain a bare provision
Of food and clothing—

GIACOMO.

Nothing more? Alas!
Bare must be the provision which strict law
Awards, and agèd, sullen avarice pays.
Why did my father not apprentice me
To some mechanic trade? I should have then
Been trained in no highborn necessities
Which I could meet not by my daily toil.
The eldest son of a rich nobleman
Is heir to all his incapacities;
He has wide wants, and narrow powers. If you,
Cardinal Camillo, were reduced at once
From thrice-driven beds of down, and delicate food,

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An hundred servants, and six palaces,
To that which nature doth indeed require?—

CAMILLO.

Nay, there is reason in your plea; 'twere hard.

GIACOMO.

'Tis hard for a firm man to bear: but I
Have a dear wife, a lady of high birth,
Whose dowry in ill hour I lent my father
Without a bond or witness to the deed:
And children, who inherit her fine senses,
The fairest creatures in this breathing world;
And she and they reproach me not. Cardinal,
Do you not think the Pope would interpose
And stretch authority beyond the law?

CAMILLO.

Though your peculiar case is hard, I know
The Pope will not divert the course of law.
After that impious feast the other night
I spoke with him, and urged him then to check
Your father's cruel hand; he frowned and said,
"Children are disobedient, and they sting
"Their fathers'[1] hearts to madness and despair,
"Requiting years of care with contumely.
"I pity the Count Cenci from my heart;
"His outraged love perhaps awakened hate,
"And thus he is exasperated to ill.
"In the great war between the old and young
"I, who have white hairs and a tottering body,
"Will keep at least blameless neutrality."

Enter ORSINO.

You, my good Lord Orsino, heard those words.

[1] In both Shelley's editions, *father's*.

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ORSINO.

What words?

GIACOMO.

Alas, repeat them not again!
There then is no redress for me, at least
None but that which I may achieve myself,
Since I am driven to the brink.—But, say,
My innocent sister and my only brother
Are dying underneath my father's eye.
The memorable torturers of this land,
Galeaz Visconti, Borgia, Ezzelin,
Never inflicted on the meanest slave
What these endure; shall they have no protection?

CAMILLO.

Why, if they would petition to the Pope
I see not how he could refuse it—yet
He holds it of most dangerous example
In aught to weaken the paternal power,
Being, as 'twere, the shadow of his own.
I pray you now excuse me. I have business
That will not bear delay. (*Exit* CAMILLO.)

GIACOMO.

But you, Orsino,
Have the petition: wherefore not present it?

ORSINO.

I have presented it, and backed it with
My earnest prayers, and urgent interest;
It was returned unanswered. I doubt not
But that the strange and execrable deeds
Alleged in it—in truth they might well baffle

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Any belief—have turned the Pope's displeasure
Upon the accusers from the criminal:
So I should guess from what Camillo said.

GIACOMO.

My friend, that palace-walking devil Gold
Has whispered silence to his Holiness:
And we are left, as scorpions ringed with fire.[1]
What should we do but strike ourselves to death?
For he who is our murderous persecutor
Is shielded by a father's holy name,
Or I would— (*stops abruptly*)

ORSINO.

What? Fear not to speak your thought.
Words are but holy as the deeds they cover:
A priest who has forsworn the God he serves;
A judge who makes Truth[2] weep at his decree;
A friend who should weave counsel, as I now,
But as the mantle of some selfish guile;
A father who is all a tyrant seems,
Were the profaner for his sacred name.

GIACOMO.

Ask me not what I think; the unwilling brain
Feigns often what it would not; and we trust
Imagination with such phantasies
As the tongue dares not fashion into words,
Which have no words, their horror makes them dim

[1] In Shelley's editions there is a comma after *fire*. Mrs. Shelley substitutes the full-stop.

[2] In the first edition, and in Mrs. Shelley's editions, this line reads

A judge who makes *the* truth weep at his decree;

but in the second edition the word *the* is dropped,—I think advisedly, though it is not cancelled in the list of errata. Mr. Rossetti adopts this second reading. *Truth* is not spelt with a capital, as far as I know, in any edition earlier than Mr. Rossetti's; but as the word is used personally, it doubtless should be so spelt in accordance with Shelley's evident though not invariable practice.

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To the mind's eye.—My heart denies itself
To think what you demand.

ORSINO.

But a friend's bosom
Is as the inmost cave of our own mind
Where we sit shut from the wide gaze of day,
And from the all-communicating air.
You look what I suspected—

GIACOMO.

Spare me now!
I am as one lost in a midnight wood,
Who dares not ask some harmless passenger
The path across the wilderness, lest he,
As my thoughts are, should be—a murderer.
I know you are my friend, and all I dare
Speak to my soul that will I trust with thee.
But now my heart is heavy, and would take
Lone counsel from a night of sleepless care.
Pardon me, that I say farewell—farewell!
I would that to my own suspected self
I could address a word so full of peace.

ORSINO.

Farewell!—Be your thoughts better or more bold.
(*Exit* GIACOMO.)
I had disposed the Cardinal Camillo
To feed his hope with cold encouragement:
It fortunately serves my close designs
That 'tis a trick of this same family
To analyse their own and other minds.
Such self-anatomy shall teach the will
Dangerous secrets: for it tempts our powers,

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Knowing what must be thought, and may be done,
Into the depth of darkest purposes:
So Cenci fell into the pit; even I,
Since Beatrice unveiled me to myself,
And made me shrink from what I cannot shun,
Shew a poor figure to my own esteem,
To which I grow half reconciled. I'll do
As little mischief as I can; that thought
Shall fee the accuser conscience.

(*After a pause*)

Now what harm
If Cenci should be murdered?—Yet, if murdered,
Wherefore by me? And what if I could take
The profit, yet omit the sin and peril
In such an action? Of all earthly things
I fear a man whose blows outspeed his words;
And such is Cenci: and while Cenci lives
His daughter's dowry were a secret grave
If a priest wins her.—Oh, fair Beatrice!
Would that I loved thee not, or loving thee
Could but despise danger and gold and all
That frowns between my wish and its effect,
Or smiles beyond it! There is no escape...
Her bright form kneels beside me at the altar,
And follows me to the resort of men,
And fills my slumber with tumultuous dreams,
So when I wake my blood seems liquid fire;
And if I strike my damp and dizzy head
My hot palm scorches it: her very name,
But spoken by a stranger, makes my heart
Sicken and pant; and thus unprofitably
I clasp the phantom of unfelt delights
Till weak imagination half possesses
The self-created shadow. Yet much longer
Will I not nurse this life of feverous hours:

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From the unravelled hopes of Giacomo
I must work out my own dear purposes.
I see, as from a tower, the end of all:
Her father dead; her brother bound to me
By a dark secret, surer than the grave;
Her mother scared and unexpostulating
From the dread manner of her wish achieved:
And she!—Once more take courage my faint heart;
What dares a friendless maiden matched with thee?
I have such foresight as assures success:
Some unbeheld divinity doth ever,
When dread events are near, stir up men's minds
To black suggestions; and he prospers best,
Not who becomes the instrument of ill,
But who can flatter the dark spirit, that makes
Its empire and its prey of other hearts
Till it become his slave . . . as I will do.

(*Exit.*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

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ACT III.

SCENE I.

AN APARTMENT IN THE CENCI PALACE. LUCRETIA, TO HER ENTER BEATRICE.

BEATRICE.

(She enters staggering, and speaks wildly.)

Reach me that handkerchief!—My brain is hurt;
My eyes are full of blood; just wipe them for me...
I see but indistinctly...

LUCRETIA.

My sweet child,
You have no wound; 'tis only a cold dew
That starts from your dear brow... Alas! Alas!
What has befallen?

BEATRICE.

How comes this hair undone?
Its wandering strings must be what blind me so,
And yet I tied it fast.—O, horrible!
The pavement sinks under my feet! The walls
Spin round! I see a woman weeping there,
And standing calm and motionless, whilst I
Slide giddily as the world reels.... My God!
The beautiful blue heaven is flecked with blood!

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The sunshine on the floor is black! The air
Is changed to vapours such as the dead breathe
In charnel pits! Pah! I am choked! There creeps
A clinging, black, contaminating mist
About me... 'tis substantial, heavy, thick,
I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues
My fingers and my limbs to one another,
And eats into my sinews, and dissolves
My flesh to a pollution, poisoning
The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life!
My God! I never knew what the mad felt
Before; for I am mad beyond all doubt!
(*more wildly*)
No, I am dead! These putrefying limbs
Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul
Which would burst forth into the wandering air!
(*a pause*)
What hideous thought was that I had even now?
'Tis gone; and yet its burthen remains here
O'er these dull eyes... upon this weary heart!
O, world! O, life! O, day! O, misery!

LUCRETIA.

What ails thee, my poor child? She answers not:
Her spirit apprehends the sense of pain,
But not its cause; suffering has dried away
The source from which it sprung...

BEATRICE (*franticly*).

Like Parricide...
Misery has killed its father: yet its father
Never like mine... O, God! What thing am I?

LUCRETIA.

My dearest child, what has your father done?

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BEATRICE (*doubtfully*).

Who art thou, questioner? I have no father.
(*aside*)
She is the madhouse nurse who tends on me,
It is a piteous office.
(*To Lucretia, in a slow, subdued voice*)
Do you know
I thought I was that wretched Beatrice
Men speak of, whom her father sometimes hales
From hall to hall by the entangled hair;
At others, pens up naked in damp cells
Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there,
Till she will eat strange flesh. This woful story
So did I overact in my sick dreams,
That I imagined... no, it cannot be!
Horrible things have been in this wild world,
Prodigious mixtures, and confusions strange
Of good and ill; and worse have been conceived
Than ever there was found a heart to do.
But never fancy imaged such a deed
As...
(*pauses, suddenly recollecting herself*)
Who art thou? Swear to me, ere I die
With fearful expectation, that indeed
Thou art not what thou seemest... Mother!

LUCRETIA.

Oh!
My sweet child, know you...

BEATRICE.

Yet speak it not:
For then if this be truth, that other too
Must be a truth, a firm enduring truth,

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Linked with each lasting circumstance of life,
Never to change, never to pass away.
Why so it is. This is the Cenci Palace;
Thou art Lucretia; I am Beatrice.
I have talked some wild words, but will no more.
Mother, come near me: from this point of time,
I am...

(*her voice dies away faintly*)

LUCRETIA.

Alas! What has befallen thee, child?
What has thy father done?

BEATRICE.

What have I done?
Am I not innocent? Is it my crime
That one with white hair, and imperious brow,
Who tortured me from my forgotten years,
As parents only dare, should call himself
My father, yet should be!—Oh, what am I?
What name, what place, what memory shall be mine?
What retrospects, outliving even despair?

LUCRETIA.

He is a violent tyrant, surely, child:
We know that death alone can make us free;
His death or ours. But what can he have done
Of deadlier outrage or worse injury?
Thou art unlike thyself; thine eyes shoot forth
A wandering and strange spirit. Speak to me,
Unlock those pallid hands whose fingers twine
With one another.

BEATRICE.

'Tis the restless life

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Tortured within them. If I try to speak
I shall go mad. Aye, something must be done;
What, yet I know not... something which shall make
The thing that I have suffered but a shadow
In the dread lightning which avenges it;
Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying
The consequence of what it cannot cure.
Some such thing is to be endured or done:
When I know what, I shall be still and calm,
And never any thing will move me more.
But now!—Oh blood, which art my father's blood,
Circling thro' these contaminated veins,
If thou, poured forth on the polluted earth,
Could wash away the crime, and punishment
By which I suffer.... no, that cannot be!
Many might doubt there were a God above
Who sees and permits evil, and so die:
That faith no agony shall obscure in me.

LUCRETIA.

It must indeed have been some bitter wrong;
Yet what, I dare not guess. Oh, my lost child,
Hide not in proud impenetrable grief
Thy sufferings from my fear.

BEATRICE.

I hide them not.
What are the words which you would have me speak?
I, who can feign no image in my mind
Of that which has transformed me: I, whose thought
Is like a ghost shrouded and folded up
In its own formless horror: of all words,
That minister to mortal intercourse,
Which wouldst thou hear? For there is none to tell

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My misery: if another ever knew
Aught like to it, she died as I will die,
And left it, as I must, without a name.
Death! Death! Our law and our religion call thee
A punishment and a reward . . . Oh, which
Have I deserved?

LUCRETIA.

The peace of innocence;
Till in your season you be called to heaven.
Whate'er you may have suffered, you have done
No evil. Death must be the punishment
Of crime, or the reward of trampling down
The thorns which God has strewed upon the path
Which leads to immortality.

BEATRICE.

Aye, death. . .
The punishment of crime. I pray thee, God,
Let me not be bewildered while I judge.
If I must live day after day, and keep
These limbs, the unworthy temple of thy spirit,
As a foul den from which what thou abhorrest
May mock thee, unavenged. . . it shall not be!
Self-murder. . . no, that might be no escape,
For thy decree yawns like a Hell between
Our will and it:—O! In this mortal world
There is no vindication and no law
Which can adjudge and execute the doom
Of that through which I suffer.

Enter ORSINO.

(*She approaches him solemnly.*) Welcome, Friend!
I have to tell you that, since last we met,

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I have endured a wrong so great and strange,
That neither life nor[1] death can give me rest.
Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds
Which have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.

ORSINO.

And what is he who has thus injured you?

BEATRICE.

The man they call my father: a dread name.

ORSINO.

It cannot be...

BEATRICE.

What it can be, or not,
Forbear to think. It is, and it has been;
Advise me how it shall not be again.
I thought to die; but a religious awe
Restrains me, and the dread lest death itself
Might be no refuge from the consciousness
Of what is yet unexpiated. Oh, speak!

ORSINO.

Accuse him of the deed, and let the law
Avenge thee.

BEATRICE.

Oh, ice-hearted counsellor!
If I could find a word that might make known
The crime of my destroyer; and that done,

[1] In the first edition we read *neither life or death*,—in the second *neither life nor death*. Mrs. Shelley, curiously enough, follows the first edition in *her* first, and the second in her second. Mr. Rossetti follows the more grammatical reading of Shelley's second edition, as I have done.

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My tongue should like a knife tear out the secret
Which cankers my heart's core; aye, lay all bare
So that my unpolluted fame should be
With vilest gossips a stale mouthèd story;
A mock, a bye-word, an astonishment:—
If this were done, which never shall be done,
Think of the offender's gold, his dreaded hate,
And the strange horror of the accuser's tale,
Baffling belief, and overpowering speech;
Scarce whispered, unimaginable, wrapt
In hideous hints... Oh, most assured redress!

ORSINO.

You will endure it then?

BEATRICE.

Endure?—Orsino,
It seems your counsel is small profit.

(*Turns from him, and speaks half to herself*)

Aye,
All must be suddenly resolved and done.
What is this undistinguishable mist
Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow,
Darkening each other?

ORSINO.

Should the offender live?
Triumph in his misdeed? and make, by use,
His crime, whate'er it is, dreadful no doubt,
Thine element; until thou mayest become
Utterly lost; subdued even to the hue
Of that which thou permittest?

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BEATRICE (*To herself*).

Mighty death!
Thou double-visaged shadow! Only judge!
Rightfullest arbiter!

(*She retires absorbed in thought.*)

LUCRETIA.

If the lightning
Of God has e'er descended to avenge...

ORSINO.

Blaspheme not! His high Providence commits
Its glory on this earth, and their own wrongs
Into the hands of men; if they neglect
To punish crime...

LUCRETIA.

But if one, like this wretch,
Should mock with gold, opinion law and power?
If there be no appeal to that which makes
The guiltiest tremble? If because our wrongs,
For that they are unnatural, strange and monstrous,
Exceed all measure of belief? Oh, God!
If, for the very reasons which should make
Redress most swift and sure, our injurer triumphs?
And we, the victims, bear worse punishment
Than that appointed for their torturer?

ORSINO.

Think not
But that there is redress where there is wrong,
So we be bold enough to seize it.

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LUCRETIA.

How?

If there were any way to make all sure,
I know not... but I think it might be good
To...

ORSINO.

Why, his late outrage to Beatrice;
For it is such, as I but faintly guess,
As makes remorse dishonour, and leaves her
Only one duty, how she may avenge:
You, but one refuge from ills ill endured;
Me, but one counsel...

LUCRETIA.

For we cannot hope
That aid, or retribution, or resource
Will arise thence, where every other one
Might find them with less need.

(BEATRICE *advances.*)

ORSINO.

Then...

BEATRICE.

Peace, Orsino!
And, honoured Lady, while I speak, I pray,
That you put off, as garments overworn,
Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear,
And all the fit restraints of daily life,
Which have been borne from childhood, but which now
Would be a mockery to my holier plea.
As I have said, I have endured a wrong,
Which, though it be expressionless, is such

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As asks atonement; both for what is past,
And lest I be reserved, day after day,
To load with crimes an overburthened soul,
And be... what ye can dream not. I have prayed
To God, and I have talked with my own heart,
And have unravelled my entangled will,
And have at length determined what is right.
Art thou my friend Orsino? False or true?
Pledge thy salvation ere I speak.

ORSINO.

I swear
To dedicate my cunning, and my strength,
My silence, and whatever else is mine,
To thy commands.

LUCRETIA.

You think we should devise
His death?

BEATRICE.

And execute what is devised,
And suddenly. We must be brief and bold.

ORSINO.

And yet most cautious.

LUCRETIA.

For the jealous laws
Would punish us with death and infamy
For that which it became themselves to do.

BEATRICE.

Be cautious as ye may, but prompt. Orsino,
What are the means?

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ORSINO.

I know two dull, fierce outlaws,
Who think man's spirit as a worm's, and they
Would trample out, for any slight caprice,
The meanest or the noblest life. This mood
Is marketable here in Rome. They sell
What we now want.

LUCRETIA.

To-morrow before dawn,
Cenci will take us to that lonely rock,
Petrella, in the Apulian Apennines.
If he arrive there. . .

BEATRICE.

He must not arrive.

ORSINO.

Will it be dark before you reach the tower?

LUCRETIA.

The sun will scarce be set.

BEATRICE.

But I remember
Two miles on this side of the fort, the road
Crosses a deep ravine; 'tis rough and narrow,
And winds with short turns down the precipice;
And in its depth there is a mighty rock,
Which has, from unimaginable years,
Sustained itself with terror and with toil
Over a gulph, and with the agony
With which it clings seems slowly coming down;
Even as a wretched soul hour after hour,

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Clings to the mass of life; yet clinging, leans;
And leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss
In which it fears to fall: beneath this crag
Huge as despair, as if in weariness,
The melancholy mountain yawns ... below,
You hear but see not an impetuous torrent
Raging among the caverns, and a bridge
Crosses the chasm; and high above there grow,
With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag,
Cedars, and yews, and pines; whose tangled hair
Is matted in one solid roof of shade
By the dark ivy's twine. At noon-day here
'Tis twilight, and at sunset blackest night.

ORSINO.

Before you reach that bridge make some excuse
For spurring on your mules, or loitering
Until ...

BEATRICE.

What sound is that?

LUCRETIA.

Hark! No, it cannot be a servant's step;
It must be Cenci, unexpectedly
Returned ... Make some excuse for being here.

BEATRICE.

(*to* ORSINO, *as she goes out*)

That step we hear approach must never pass
The bridge of which we spoke.

(*Exeunt* LUCRETIA *and* BEATRICE.)

ORSINO.

What shall I do?

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Cenci must find me here, and I must bear
The imperious inquisition of his looks
As to what brought me hither: let me mask
Mine own in some inane and vacant smile.

Enter GIACOMO, *in a hurried manner.*

How! Have you ventured hither?[1] Know you then
That Cenci is from home?

GIACOMO.

I sought him here;
And now must wait till he returns.

ORSINO.

Great God!
Weigh you the danger of this rashness?

GIACOMO.

Aye!
Does my destroyer know his danger? We
Are now no more, as once, parent and child,
But man to man; the oppressor to the oppressed;
The slanderer to the slandered; foe to foe:
He has cast Nature off, which was his shield,
And Nature casts him off, who is her shame;
And I spurn both. Is it a father's throat
Which I will shake, and say, I ask not gold;
I ask not happy years; nor memories
Of tranquil childhood; nor home-sheltered love;
Though all these hast thou torn from me, and more;
But only my fair fame; only one hoard
Of peace, which I thought hidden from thy hate,

[1] In the first edition, and in those Mrs. Shelley, we read *thither* ead of *hither*. In Shelley's second ion, however, the word is *hither*, as in the text; and I think there can be no doubt that that is the right word.

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Under the penury heaped on me by thee,
Or I will... God can understand and pardon,
Why should I speak with man?

ORSINO.

Be calm, dear friend.

GIACOMO.

Well, I will calmly tell you what he did.
This old Francesco Cenci, as you know,
Borrowed the dowry of my wife from me,
And then denied the loan; and left me so
In poverty, the which I sought to mend
By holding a poor office in the state.
It had been promised to me, and already
I bought new clothing for my ragged babes,
And my wife smiled; and my heart knew repose.
When Cenci's intercession, as I found,
Conferred this office on a wretch, whom thus
He paid for vilest service. I returned
With this ill news, and we sate sad together
Solacing our despondency with tears
Of such affection and unbroken faith
As temper life's worst bitterness; when he,
As he is wont, came to upbraid and curse,
Mocking our poverty, and telling us
Such was God's scourge for disobedient sons.
And then, that I might strike him dumb with shame,
I spoke of my wife's dowry; but he coined
A brief yet specious tale, how I had wasted
The sum in secret riot; and he saw
My wife was touched, and he went smiling forth.
And when I knew the impression he had made,
And felt my wife insult with silent scorn
My ardent truth, and look averse and cold,

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I went forth too: but soon returned again;
Yet not so soon but that my wife had taught
My children her harsh thoughts, and they all cried,
"Give us clothes, father! Give us better food!
"What you in one night squander were enough
"For months!" I looked, and saw that home was hell.
And to that hell will I return no more
Until mine enemy has rendered up
Atonement, or, as he gave life to me
I will, reversing nature's law . . .

ORSINO.

Trust me,
The compensation which thou seekest here
Will be denied.

GIACOMO.

Then . . . Are you not my friend?
Did you not hint at the alternative,
Upon the brink of which you see I stand,
The other day when we conversed together?
My wrongs were then less. That word parricide,
Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.

ORSINO.

It must be fear itself, for the bare word
Is hollow mockery. Mark, how wisest God
Draws to one point the threads of a just doom,
So sanctifying it: what you devise
Is, as it were, accomplished.

GIACOMO.

Is he dead?

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ORSINO.

His grave is ready. Know that since we met
Cenci has done an outrage to his daughter.

GIACOMO.

What outrage?

ORSINO.

That she speaks not, but you may
Conceive such half conjectures as I do,
From her fixed paleness, and the lofty grief
Of her stern brow bent on the idle air,
And her severe unmodulated voice,
Drowning both tenderness and dread; and last
From this; that whilst her step-mother and I,
Bewildered in our horror, talked together
With obscure hints; both self-misunderstood
And darkly guessing, stumbling, in our talk,
Over the truth, and yet to its revenge,
She interrupted us, and with a look
Which told before she spoke it, he must die: . . .

GIACOMO.

It is enough. My doubts are well appeased;
There is a higher reason for the act
Than mine; there is a holier judge than me,
A more unblamed avenger. Beatrice,
Who in the gentleness of thy sweet youth
Hast never trodden on a worm, or bruised
A living flower, but thou hast pitied it
With needless tears! Fair sister, thou in whom
Men wondered how such loveliness and wisdom
Did not destroy each other! Is there made
Ravage of thee? O, heart, I ask no more
Justification! Shall I wait, Orsino,
Till he return, and stab him at the door?

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ORSINO.

Not so; some accident might interpose
To rescue him from what is now most sure;
And you are unprovided where to fly,
How to excuse or to conceal. Nay, listen:
All is contrived; success is so assured
That...

Enter BEATRICE.

BEATRICE.

'Tis my brother's voice! You know me not?

GIACOMO.

My sister, my lost sister!

BEATRICE.

Lost indeed!
I see Orsino has talked with you, and
That you conjecture things too horrible
To speak, yet far less than the truth. Now, stay not,
He might return: yet kiss me; I shall know
That then thou hast consented to his death.
Farewell, farewell! Let piety to God,
Brotherly love, justice and clemency,
And all things that make tender hardest hearts
Make thine hard, brother. Answer not... farewell.

(*Exeunt severally.*)

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SCENE II.

A MEAN APARTMENT IN GIACOMO'S HOUSE. GIACOMO ALONE.

GIACOMO.

'Tis midnight, and Orsino comes not yet.

(*Thunder, and the sound of a storm.*)

What! can the everlasting elements
Feel with a worm like man? If so the shaft
Of mercy-wingèd lightning would not fall
On stones and trees. My wife and children sleep:
They are now living in unmeaning dreams:
But I must wake, still doubting if that deed
Be just which was most necessary. O,
Thou unreplenished lamp! whose narrow fire
Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge
Devouring darkness hovers! Thou small flame,
Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,
Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,
Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail and be
As thou hadst never been! So wastes and sinks
Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine:
But that no power can fill with vital oil[1]
That broken lamp of flesh. Ha! 'tis the blood
Which fed these veins that ebbs till all is cold:
It is the form that moulded mine that sinks

[1] In the second edition there is a comma at *oil*: in the first there is none. I am very doubtful which sense (for the comma makes all the difference) Shelley meant; but I incline to that of the first edition as the more characteristic: Mrs. Shelley adopts it.

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Into the white and yellow spasms of death:
It is the soul by which mine was arrayed
In God's immortal likeness which now stands
Naked before Heaven's judgment seat!
(*a bell strikes*)
One! Two!
The hours crawl on; and when my hairs are white,
My son will then perhaps be waiting thus,
Tortured between just hate and vain remorse;
Chiding the tardy messenger of news
Like those which I expect. I almost wish
He be not dead, although my wrongs are great;
Yet... 'tis Orsino's step...

Enter ORSINO.

Speak!

ORSINO.

I am come
To say he has escaped.

GIACOMO.

Escaped!

ORSINO.

And safe
Within Petrella. He past by the spot
Appointed for the deed an hour too soon.

GIACOMO.

Are we the fools of such contingencies?
And do we waste in blind misgivings thus
The hours when we should act? Then wind and thunder,
Which seemed to howl his knell, is the loud laughter
With which Heaven mocks our weakness! I henceforth

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Will ne'er repent of aught designed or done
But my repentance.

ORSINO.

See, the lamp is out.

GIACOMO.

If no remorse is ours when the dim air
Has drank this innocent flame, why should we quail
When Cenci's life, that light by which ill spirits
See the worst deeds they prompt, shall sink for ever?
No, I am hardened.

ORSINO.

Why, what need of this?
Who feared the pale intrusion of remorse
In a just deed? Altho' our first plan failed,
Doubt not but he will soon be laid to rest.
But light the lamp; let us not talk i' the dark.

GIACOMO (*lighting the lamp*).

And yet once quenched I cannot thus relume
My father's life: do you not think his ghost
Might plead that argument with God?

ORSINO.

Once gone
You cannot now recall your sister's peace;
Your own extinguished years of youth and hope;
Nor your wife's bitter words; nor all the taunts
Which, from the prosperous, weak misfortune takes;
Nor your dead mother; nor...

GIACOMO.

O, speak no more!
I am resolved, although this very hand

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Must quench the life that animated it.

ORSINO.

There is no need of that. Listen: you know
Olimpio, the castellan of Petrella
In old Colonna's time; him whom your father
Degraded from his post? And Marzio,
That desperate wretch, whom he deprived last year
Of a reward of blood, well earned and due?

GIACOMO.

I knew Olimpio; and they say he hated
Old Cenci so, that in his silent rage
His lips grew white only to see him pass.
Of Marzio I know nothing.

ORSINO.

Marzio's hate
Matches Olimpio's. I have sent these men,
But in your name, and as at your request,
To talk with Beatrice and Lucretia.

GIACOMO.

Only to talk?

ORSINO.

The moments which even now
Pass onward to tomorrow's midnight hour[1]
May memorize their flight with death: ere then
They must have talked, and may perhaps have done,
And made an end....

GIACOMO.

Listen! What sound is that?

[1] In the first edition this line is—
Pass onward to morrow's midnight hour.
In the second it is as given in the text.

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ORSINO.

The housedog moans, and the beams crack: nought else.

GIACOMO.

It is my wife complaining in her sleep:
I doubt not she is saying bitter things
Of me; and all my children round her dreaming
That I deny them sustenance.

ORSINO.

Whilst he
Who truly took it from them, and who fills
Their hungry rest with bitterness, now sleeps
Lapped in bad pleasures, and triumphantly
Mocks thee in visions of successful hate
Too like the truth of day.

GIACOMO.

If e'er he wakes
Again, I will not trust to hireling hands...

ORSINO.

Why, that were well. I must be gone; good night:[1]
When next we meet—may all be done!

GIACOMO.

And all
Forgotten: Oh, that I had never been!

(*Exeunt.*)

[1] These two final speeches are divided as in Shelley's second edition: in the first they stand thus:

ORS. Why, that were well. I must be gone; good night!
When next we meet...
GIAC. May all be done—and all
Forgotten—Oh, that I had never been!

Mrs. Shelley follows the second reading, which is really in the list of errata. Mr. Rossetti restores the first, which seems to me the better: it is quite in the subtle vein of Orsino to elicit such a wish from Giacomo rather than express it himself.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

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ACT IV.

SCENE I.

AN APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE OF PETRELLA. ENTER CENCI.

CENCI.

She comes not; yet I left her even now
Vanquished and faint. She knows the penalty
Of her delay: yet what if threats are vain?
Am I not now[1] within Petrella's moat?
Or fear I still the eyes and ears of Rome?
Might I not drag her by the golden hair?
Stamp on her? Keep her sleepless till her brain
Be overworn? Tame her with chains and famine?
Less would suffice. Yet so to leave undone
What I most seek! No, 'tis her stubborn will
Which by its own consent shall stoop as low
As that which drags it down.

Enter LUCRETIA.

Thou loathèd wretch!
Hide thee from my abhorrence; Fly, begone!
Yet stay! Bid Beatrice come hither.

LUCRETIA.

Oh,

[1] In the first edition we read *Am I now not*,—in the second *Am I not now*. Mrs. Shelley and Mr. Rossetti follow the second; and the transposition of the two words in the first edition certainly looks like an oversight such as Shelley would have corrected in the second had he observed it.

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Husband! I pray for thine own wretched sake
Heed what thou dost. A man who walks like thee
Thro' crimes, and thro' the danger of his crimes,
Each hour may stumble o'er a sudden grave.
And thou art old; thy hairs are hoary gray;
As thou wouldst save thyself from death and hell,
Pity thy daughter; give her to some friend
In marriage: so that she may tempt thee not
To hatred, or worse thoughts, if worse there be.

CENCI.

What! like her sister who has found a home
To mock my hate from with prosperity?
Strange ruin shall destroy both her and thee
And all that yet remain. My death may be
Rapid, her destiny outspeeds it. Go,
Bid her come hither, and before my mood
Be changed, lest I should drag her by the hair.

LUCRETIA.

She sent me to thee, husband. At thy presence
She fell, as thou dost know, into a trance;
And in that trance she heard a voice which said,
"Cenci must die! Let him confess himself!
"Even now the accusing Angel waits to hear
"If God, to punish his enormous crimes,
"Harden his dying heart!"

CENCI.

Why—such things are...
No doubt divine revealings may be made.
'Tis plain I have been favoured from above,
For when I cursed my sons they died.—Aye... so...
As to the right or wrong that's talk... repentance...
Repentance is an easy moment's work

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And more depends on God than me. Well... well...
I must give up the greater point, which was
To poison and corrupt her soul.

(*A pause; Lucretia approaches anxiously, and then shrinks back as he speaks.*)

One, two;
Aye... Rocco and Cristofano my curse
Strangled: and Giacomo, I think, will find
Life a worse Hell than that beyond the grave:
Beatrice shall, if there be skill in hate,
Die in despair, blaspheming: to Bernardo,
He is so innocent, I will bequeath
The memory of these deeds, and make his youth
The sepulchre of hope, where evil thoughts
Shall grow like weeds on a neglected tomb.
When all is done, out in the wide Campagna,
I will pile up my silver and my gold;
My costly robes, paintings and tapestries;
My parchments and all records of my wealth,
And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave
Of my possessions nothing but my name;
Which shall be an inheritance to strip
Its wearer bare as infamy. That done,
My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign
Into the hands of him who wielded it;
Be it for its own punishment or theirs,
He will not ask it of me till the lash
Be broken in its last and deepest wound;
Until its hate be all inflicted. Yet,
Lest death outspeed my purpose, let me make
Short work and sure... (*going*)

LUCRETIA.

(*Stops him*)

Oh, stay! It was a feint:

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She had no vision, and she heard no voice.
I said it but to awe thee.

CENCI.

That is well.
Vile palterer with the sacred truth of God,
Be thy soul choked with that blaspheming lie!
For Beatrice worse terrors are in store
To bend her to my will.

LUCRETIA.

Oh! to what will?
What cruel sufferings more than she has known
Canst thou inflict?

CENCI.

Andrea! Go call my daughter,
And if she comes not tell her that I come.
What sufferings? I will drag her, step by step,
Thro' infamies unheard of among men:
She shall stand shelterless in the broad noon
Of public scorn, for acts blazoned abroad,
One among which shall be . . . What? Canst thou guess?
She shall become, (for what she most abhors
Shall have a fascination to entrap
Her loathing will), to her own conscious self
All she appears to others; and when dead,
As she shall die unshrived and unforgiven,
A rebel to her father and her God,
Her corpse shall be abandoned to the hounds;
Her name shall be the terror of the earth;
Her spirit shall approach the throne of God
Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make
Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin.

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Enter ANDREA.

ANDREA.

The lady Beatrice . . .

CENCI.

Speak, pale slave! What
Said she?

ANDREA.

My Lord, 'twas what she looked;[1] she said:
"Go tell my father that I see the gulph
"Of Hell between us two, which he may pass,
"I will not."

(*Exit* ANDREA.)

CENCI.

Go thou quick, Lucretia,
Tell her to come; yet let her understand
Her coming is consent: and say, moreover,
That if she come not I will curse her.

(*Exit* LUCRETIA.)

Ha!
With what but with a father's curse doth God
Panic-strike armèd victory, and make pale
Cities in their prosperity? The world's Father
Must grant a parent's prayer against his child
Be he who asks even what men call me.
Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers
Awe her before I speak? For I on them
Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came.

[1] The semi-colon here is in the first edition; but the sense is perverted by its omission from the second. Mrs. Shelley follows the first edition. Mr. Rossetti substitutes a full-stop for a semi-colon.

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Enter LUCRETIA.

Well; what? Speak, wretch!

LUCRETIA.

She said, "I cannot come;
"Go tell my father that I see a torrent
"Of his own blood raging between us."

CENCI (*kneeling*).

God!
Hear me! If this most specious mass of flesh,
Which thou hast made my daughter; this my blood,
This particle of my divided being;
Or rather, this my bane and my disease,
Whose sight infects and poisons me; this devil
Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant
To aught good use; if her bright loveliness
Was kindled to illumine this dark world;
If nursed by thy selectest dew of love
Such virtues blossom in her as should make
The peace of life, I pray thee for my sake,
As thou the common God and Father art
Of her, and me, and all; reverse that doom!
Earth, in the name of God, let her food be
Poison, until she be encrusted round
With leprous stains! Heaven, rain upon her head
The blistering drops of the Maremma's dew,
Till she be speckled like a toad; parch up
Those love-enkindled lips, warp those fine limbs
To loathèd lameness! All beholding sun,
Strike in thine envy those life-darting eyes
With thine own blinding beams!

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LUCRETIA.

Peace! Peace![1]
For thine own sake unsay those dreadful words.
When high God grants he punishes such prayers.

CENCI.

(*Leaping up, and throwing his right hand towards Heaven*)
He does his will, I mine! This in addition,
That if she have a child . . .

LUCRETIA.

Horrible thought!

CENCI.

That if she ever have a child; and thou,
Quick Nature! I adjure thee by thy God,
That thou be fruitful in her, and encrease
And multiply, fulfilling his command,
And my deep imprecation! May it be
A hideous likeness of herself, that as
From a distorting mirror, she may see
Her image mixed with what she most abhors,
Smiling upon her from her nursing breast.
And that the child may from its infancy
Grow, day by day, more wicked and deformed,
Turning her mother's love to misery:
And that both she and it may live until
It shall repay her care and pain with hate,
Or what may else be more unnatural.
So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs

[1] Mr. Rossetti, observing the shortness by a foot of this line, says we ought perhaps to read "Peace, husband! peace:" I do not imagine for a moment that any such word as *husband* has dropped out. Short lines are common enough in *The Cenci*, and indeed in the rapid dialogue of most great plays.

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Of the loud world to a dishonoured grave.
Shall I revoke this curse? Go, bid her come,
Before my words are chronicled in heaven.

(*Exit* LUCRETIA.)

I do not feel as if I were a man,
But like a fiend appointed to chastise
The offences of some unremembered world.
My blood is running up and down my veins;
A fearful pleasure makes it prick and tingle:
I feel a giddy sickness of strange awe;
My heart is beating with an expectation
Of horrid joy.

Enter LUCRETIA.

What? Speak!

LUCRETIA.

She bids thee curse;
And if thy curses, as they cannot do,
Could kill her soul . . .

CENCI.

She would not come. 'Tis well,
I can do both: first take what I demand,
And then extort concession. To thy chamber!
Fly ere I spurn thee: and beware this night
That thou cross not my footsteps. It were safer
To come between the tiger and his prey.

(*Exit* LUCRETIA.)

It must be late; mine eyes grow weary dim
With unaccustomed heaviness of sleep.
Conscience! Oh, thou most insolent of lies!
They say that sleep, that healing dew of heaven,
Steeps not in balm the foldings of the brain

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Which thinks thee an impostor. I will go
First to belie thee with an hour of rest,
Which will be deep and calm, I feel: and then ...
O, multitudinous Hell, the fiends will shake
Thine arches with the laughter of their joy!
There shall be lamentation heard in Heaven
As o'er an angel fallen; and upon Earth
All good shall droop and sicken, and ill things
Shall with a spirit of unnatural life
Stir and be quickened ... even as I am now.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE II.[1]

BEFORE THE CASTLE OF PETRELLA. ENTER BEATRICE AND LUCRETIA ABOVE ON THE RAMPARTS.

BEATRICE.

They come not yet.

LUCRETIA.

'Tis scarce midnight.

BEATRICE.

How slow
Behind the course of thought, even sick with speed,
Lags leaden-footed time!

LUCRETIA.

The minutes pass ...
If he should wake before the deed is done?

[1] The almost identical opening of three scenes is very remarkable: *'Tis midnight, and Orsino comes not yet* (III, 2); *She comes not; yet* ... (IV, 1); *They come not yet* (IV, 2).

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BEATRICE.

O, Mother! He must never wake again.
What thou hast said persuades me that our act
Will but dislodge a spirit of deep hell
Out of a human form.

LUCRETIA.

'Tis true he spoke
Of death and judgment with strange confidence
For one so wicked; as a man believing
In God, yet recking not of good or ill.
And yet to die without confession!...

BEATRICE.

Oh!
Believe that Heaven is merciful and just,
And will not add our dread necessity
To the amount of his offences.

Enter OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO, *below.*

LUCRETIA.

See,
They come.

BEATRICE.

All mortal things must hasten thus
To their dark end. Let us go down.

(*Exeunt* LUCRETIA *and* BEATRICE *from above.*)

OLIMPIO.

How feel you to this work?

MARZIO.

As one who thinks

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A thousand crowns excellent market price
For an old murderer's life. Your cheeks are pale.

OLIMPIO.

It is the white reflexion of your own,
Which you call pale.

MARZIO.

Is that their natural hue?

OLIMPIO.

Or 'tis my hate and the deferred desire
To wreak it, which extinguishes their blood.

MARZIO.

You are inclined then to this business?

OLIMPIO.

Aye.
If one should bribe me with a thousand crowns
To kill a serpent which had stung my child,
I could not be more willing.

Enter BEATRICE *and* LUCRETIA, *below.*

Noble ladies!

BEATRICE.

Are ye resolved?

OLIMPIO.

Is he asleep?

MARZIO.

Is all
Quiet?

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LUCRETIA.

I mixed an opiate with his drink:
He sleeps so soundly...

BEATRICE.

That his death will be
But as a change of sin-chastising dreams,
A dark continuance of the Hell within him,
Which God extinguish! But ye are resolved?
Ye know it is a high and holy deed?

OLIMPIO.

We are resolved.

MARZIO.

As to the how this act
Be warranted, it rests with you.

BEATRICE.

Well, follow!

OLIMPIO.

Hush! Hark! What noise is that?

MARZIO.

Ha! some one comes!

BEATRICE.

Ye conscience-stricken cravens, rock to rest
Your baby hearts. It is the iron gate,
Which ye left open, swinging to the wind,
That enters whistling as in scorn. Come, follow!
And be your steps like mine, light, quick and bold.

(*Exeunt.*)

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SCENE III.

AN APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE. ENTER BEATRICE AND LUCRETIA.

LUCRETIA.

They are about it now.

BEATRICE.

Nay, it is done.

LUCRETIA.

I have not heard him groan.

BEATRICE.

He will not groan.

LUCRETIA.

What sound is that?

BEATRICE.

List! 'tis the tread of feet
About his bed.

LUCRETIA.

My God!
If he be now a cold stiff corpse...

BEATRICE.

O, fear not
What may be done, but what is left undone:

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The act seals all.

Enter OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO.

Is it accomplished?

MARZIO.

What?

OLIMPIO.

Did you not call?

BEATRICE.

When?

OLIMPIO.

Now.

BEATRICE.

I ask if all is over?

OLIMPIO.

We dare not kill an old and sleeping man;
His thin grey hair, his stern and reverent brow,
His veinèd hands crossed on his heaving breast,
And the calm innocent sleep in which he lay,
Quelled me. Indeed, indeed, I cannot do it.

MARZIO.

But I was bolder; for I chid Olimpio,
And bade him bear his wrongs to his own grave
And leave me the reward. And now my knife
Touched the loose wrinkled throat, when the old man
Stirred in his sleep, and said, "God! hear, O, hear,
"A father's curse! What,[1] art thou not our father?"

[1] There is no stop here in either of Shelley's editions. The comma is supplied in Mrs. Shelley's.

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And then he laughed. I knew it was the ghost
Of my dead father speaking through his lips,
And could not kill him.

BEATRICE.

Miserable slaves!
Where, if ye dare not kill a sleeping man,
Found ye the boldness to return to me
With such a deed undone? Base palterers!
Cowards and traitors! Why, the very conscience
Which ye would sell for gold and for revenge
Is an equivocation: it sleeps over
A thousand daily acts disgracing men;
And when a deed where mercy insults heaven...
Why do I talk?

(*Snatching a dagger from one of them and raising it.*)

Hadst thou a tongue to say,
She murdered her own father, I must do it!
But never dream ye shall outlive him long!

OLIMPIO.

Stop, for God's sake!

MARZIO.

I will go back and kill him.

OLIMPIO.

Give me the weapon, we must do thy will.

BEATRICE.

Take it! Depart! Return!

(*Exeunt* OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO.)

How pale thou art!

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We do but that which 'twere a deadly crime
To leave undone.

LUCRETIA.

Would it were done!

BEATRICE.

Even whilst
That doubt is passing through your mind, the world
Is conscious of a change. Darkness and hell
Have swallowed up the vapour they sent forth
To blacken the sweet light of life. My breath
Comes, methinks, lighter, and the jellied[1] blood
Runs freely thro' my veins. Hark!

Enter OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO.

He is...

OLIMPIO.

Dead!

MARZIO.

We strangled him that there might be no blood;
And then we threw his heavy corpse i' the garden
Under the balcony; 'twill seem it fell.

[1] In the first edition this word is *gellyed*, not, as Mr. Rossetti has stated, *gellied*, which first appeared in the second edition. Mrs. Shelley changed it to *jellied*; and Mr. Rossetti, again, substituted *gelid*, because he thought that "the preferable word." The question is, however, not what word is preferable, but what word Shelley meant; and, in considering that question, the original orthography makes all the difference. The fact is that, had Shelley written *gelid*, no foreign compositor could have transformed the word to *gellyed*, the main mistake of which is wholly English. I have hardly a doubt that what Shelley really wrote was *jellyed*, the *y* instead of *i* being a very common lapse in such words, of which lapse there are instances in Shelley's works; and there would be no difficulty in the transformation of *j* to *g*, whether the compositor were Italian or English.

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BEATRICE.

(*giving them a bag of coin*)

Here, take this gold, and hasten to your homes.
And, Marzio, because thou wast only awed
By that which made me tremble, wear thou this!

(*Clothes him in a rich mantle*)

It was the mantle which my grandfather
Wore in his high prosperity, and men
Envied his state: so may they envy thine.
Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God
To a just use. Live long and thrive! And, mark,
If thou hast crimes, repent: this deed is none.

(*A horn is sounded.*)

LUCRETIA.

Hark, 'tis the castle horn; my God! it sounds
Like the last trump.

BEATRICE.

Some tedious guest is coming.

LUCRETIA.

The drawbridge is let down; there is a tramp
Of horses in the court; fly, hide yourselves!

(*Exeunt* OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO.)

BEATRICE.

Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest;
I scarcely need to counterfeit it now:
The spirit which doth reign within these limbs
Seems strangely undisturbed. I could even sleep
Fearless and calm: all ill is surely past.

(*Exeunt.*)

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SCENE IV.

ANOTHER APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE. ENTER ON ONE SIDE THE LEGATE SAVELLA, INTRODUCED BY A SERVANT, AND ON THE OTHER LUCRETIA AND BERNARDO.

SAVELLA.

Lady, my duty to his Holiness
Be my excuse that thus unseasonably
I break upon your rest. I must speak with
Count Cenci; doth he sleep?

LUCRETIA.

(*in a hurried and confused manner*)
I think he sleeps;
Yet wake him not, I pray, spare me awhile,
He is a wicked and a wrathful man;[1]
Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night,
Which is, I know, a hell of angry dreams,
It were not well; indeed it were not well.
Wait till day break....
(*aside*) O, I am deadly sick!

SAVELLA.

I grieve thus to distress you, but the Count
Must answer charges of the gravest import,
And suddenly; such my commission is.

[1] In the first edition the metre breaks down here by the omission of the word *a*,—

He is a wicked and wrathful man;

but in the second edition the line stands rightly, as in the text. Mrs. Shelley follows the first edition,—Mr. Rossetti the second.

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LUCRETIA.

(*with increased agitation*)

I dare not rouse him: I know none who dare...
'Twere perilous;... you might as safely waken
A serpent; or a corpse in which some fiend
Were laid to sleep.

SAVELLA.

Lady, my moments here
Are counted. I must rouse him from his sleep,
Since none else dare.

LUCRETIA (*aside*).

O, terror! O, despair!

(*To Bernardo*)

Bernardo, conduct you the Lord Legate to
Your father's chamber.

(*Exeunt* SAVELLA *and* BERNARDO.)

Enter BEATRICE.

BEATRICE.

'Tis a messenger
Come to arrest the culprit who now stands
Before the throne of unappealable God.
Both Earth and Heaven, consenting arbiters,
Acquit our deed.

LUCRETIA.

Oh, agony of fear!
Would that he yet might live! Even now I heard
The Legate's followers whisper as they passed
They had a warrant for his instant death.

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All was prepared by unforbidden means
Which we must pay so dearly, having done.
Even now they search the tower, and find the body;
Now they suspect the truth; now they consult
Before they come to tax us with the fact;
O, horrible, 'tis all discovered!

BEATRICE.

Mother,
What is done wisely, is done well. Be bold
As thou art just. 'Tis like a truant child
To fear that others know what thou hast done,
Even from thine own strong consciousness, and thus
Write on unsteady eyes and altered cheeks
All thou wouldst hide. Be faithful to thyself,
And fear no other witness but thy fear.
For if, as cannot be, some circumstance
Should rise in accusation, we can blind
Suspicion with such cheap astonishment,
Or overbear it with such guiltless pride,
As murderers cannot feign. The deed is done,
And what may follow now regards not me.
I am as universal as the light;
Free as the earth-surrounding air; as firm
As the world's centre. Consequence, to me,
Is as the wind which strikes the solid rock
But shakes it not.

(*A cry within and tumult*)

VOICES.

Murder! Murder! Murder!

Enter BERNARDO *and* SAVELLA.

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SAVELLA (*to his followers*).

Go search the castle round; sound the alarm;
Look to the gates that none escape!

BEATRICE.

What now?

BERNARDO.

I know not what to say... my father's dead.

BEATRICE.

How; dead! he only sleeps; you mistake, brother.
His sleep is very calm, very like death;
'Tis wonderful how well a tyrant sleeps.
He is not dead?[1]

BERNARDO.

Dead; murdered.

LUCRETIA.

(*with extreme agitation*)

Oh, no, no,
He is not murdered though he may be dead;
I have alone the keys of those apartments.

SAVELLA.

Ha! Is it so?

BEATRICE.

My Lord, I pray excuse us;
We will retire; my mother is not well:

[1] In the second edition the word *dead* is italicized; but not in the first. Mrs. Shelley follows the second edition,—Mr. Rossetti the first.

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She seems quite overcome with this strange horror.

(*Exeunt* LUCRETIA *and* BEATRICE.)

SAVELLA.

Can you suspect who may have murdered him?

BERNARDO.

I know not what to think.

SAVELLA.

Can you name any
Who had an interest in his death?

BERNARDO.

Alas!
I can name none who had not, and those most
Who most lament that such a deed is done;
My mother, and my sister, and myself.

SAVELLA.

'Tis strange! There were clear marks of violence.
I found the old man's body in the moonlight
Hanging beneath the window of his chamber,
Among the branches of a pine: he could not
Have fallen there, for all his limbs lay heaped
And effortless; 'tis true there was no blood...
Favour me, Sir; it much imports your house
That all should be made clear; to tell the ladies
That I request their presence.

(*Exit* BERNARDO.)

Enter Guards bringing in MARZIO.

GUARD.

We have one.

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OFFICER.

My Lord, we found this ruffian and another
Lurking among the rocks; there is no doubt
But that they are the murderers of Count Cenci:
Each had a bag of coin; this fellow wore
A gold-inwoven robe, which shining bright
Under the dark rocks to the glimmering moon
Betrayed them to our notice: the other fell
Desperately fighting.

SAVELLA.

What does he confess?

OFFICER.

He keeps firm silence; but these lines found on him
May speak.

SAVELLA.

Their language is at least sincere.
(*reads*)
TO THE LADY BEATRICE.[1]

"That the atonement of what my nature
"Sickens to conjecture may soon arrive,
"I send thee, at thy brother's desire, those
"Who will speak and do more than I dare
"Write... Thy devoted servant,
ORSINO."

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE *and* BERNARDO.

Knowest thou this writing, Lady?

[1] In the first edition this letter is set in lines, with initial capitals, as given above; and curiously enough each of the lines except one consists of ten syllables, though plain prose enough. In the second edition the letter is set as prose.

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BEATRICE.

No.

SAVELLA.

Nor thou?

LUCRETIA.

(*Her conduct throughout the scene is marked by extreme agitation.*)

Where was it found? What is it? It should be
Orsino's hand! It speaks of that strange horror
Which never yet found utterance, but which made
Between that hapless child and her dead father
A gulph of obscure hatred.

SAVELLA.

Is it so?

Is it true, Lady, that thy father did
Such outrages as to awaken in thee
Unfilial hate?

BEATRICE.

Not hate, 'twas more than hate:
This is most true, yet wherefore question me?

SAVELLA.

There is a deed demanding question done;
Thou hast a secret which will answer not.

BEATRICE.

What sayest? My Lord, your words are bold and rash.

SAVELLA.

I do arrest all present in the name
Of the Pope's Holiness. You must to Rome.

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LUCRETIA.

O, not to Rome! Indeed we are not guilty.

BEATRICE.

Guilty! Who dares[1] talk of guilt? My Lord,
I am more innocent of parricide
Than is a child born fatherless . . . Dear Mother,
Your gentleness and patience are no shield
For this keen-judging world, this two-edged lie,[2]
Which seems, but is not. What! will human laws,
Rather will ye who are their ministers,
Bar all access to retribution first,
And then, when heaven doth interpose to do
What ye neglect, arming familiar things
To the redress of an unwonted crime,
Make ye the victims who demanded it
Culprits? 'Tis ye are culprits! That poor wretch
Who stands so pale, and trembling, and amazed,
If it be true he murdered Cenci, was
A sword in the right hand of justest God.
Wherefore should I have wielded it? Unless
The crimes which mortal tongue dare never name
God therefore scruples to avenge.

SAVELLA.

You own
That you desired his death?

BEATRICE.

It would have been

[1] It has been suggested that the word *to* has dropped out here. I do not think it has; and as yet I am not aware of its having been inserted in any edition. Mr. Swinburne points out (*Essays and Studies*, p. 202), that the proposed insertion of *to* "rather weakens the force of emphasis in this sudden outbreak of passionate protest."

[2] In the first edition there are no hyphens for the two double epithets in this line; but they are supplied in the second edition.

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A crime no less than his, if for one moment
That fierce desire had faded in my heart.
'Tis true I did believe, and hope, and pray,
Aye, I even knew . . . for God is wise and just,
That some strange sudden death hung over him.
'Tis true that this did happen, and most true
There was no other rest for me on earth,
No other hope in Heaven . . . now what of this?

SAVELLA.

Strange thoughts beget strange deeds; and here are both:
I judge thee not.

BEATRICE.

And yet, if you arrest me,
You are the judge and executioner
Of that which is the life of life: the breath
Of accusation kills an innocent name,
And leaves for lame acquittal the poor life
Which is a mask without it. 'Tis most false
That I am guilty of foul parricide;
Although I must rejoice, for justest cause,
That other hands have sent my father's soul
To ask the mercy he denied to me.
Now leave us free: stain not a noble house
With vague surmises of rejected crime;
Add to our sufferings and your own neglect
No heavier sum: let them have been enough:
Leave us the wreck we have.

SAVELLA.

I dare not, Lady.
I pray that you prepare yourselves for Rome:
There the Pope's further pleasure will be known.

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LUCRETIA.

O, not to Rome! O, take us not to Rome!

BEATRICE.

Why not to Rome, dear mother? There as here
Our innocence is as an armèd heel
To trample accusation. God is there
As here, and with his shadow ever clothes
The innocent, the injured and the weak;
And such are we. Cheer up, dear Lady, lean
On me; collect your wandering thoughts. My Lord,
As soon as you have taken some refreshment,
And had all such examinations made
Upon the spot, as may be necessary
To the full understanding of this matter,
We shall be ready. Mother; will you come?

LUCRETIA.

Ha! they will bind us to the rack, and wrest
Self-accusation from our agony!
Will Giacomo be there? Orsino? Marzio?
All present; all confronted; all demanding
Each from the other's [1] countenance the thing
Which is in every heart! O, misery!

(*She faints, and is borne out.*)

SAVELLA.

She faints: an ill appearance this.

BEATRICE.

My Lord,
She knows not yet the uses of the world.

[1] In Shelley's two editions, *others*.

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She fears that power is as a beast which grasps
And loosens not: a snake whose look transmutes
All things to guilt which is its nutriment.
She cannot know how well the supine slaves
Of blind authority read the truth of things
When written on a brow of guilelessness:
She sees not yet triumphant Innocence
Stand at the judgment-seat of mortal man,
A judge and an accuser of the wrong
Which drags it there. Prepare yourself, my Lord;
Our suite will join yours in the court below.

(*Exeunt.*)

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

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ACT V.

SCENE I.

AN APARTMENT IN ORSINO'S PALACE. ENTER ORSINO AND GIACOMO.

GIACOMO.

Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end?
O, that the vain remorse which must chastise
Crimes done, had but as loud a voice to warn
As its keen sting is mortal to avenge!
O, that the hour when present had cast off
The mantle of its mystery, and shewn
The ghastly form with which it now returns
When its scared game is roused, cheering the hounds
Of conscience to their prey! Alas! Alas!
It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed,
To kill an old and hoary-headed father.

ORSINO.

It has turned out unluckily, in truth.

GIACOMO.

To violate the sacred doors of sleep;
To cheat kind nature of the placid death
Which she prepares for overwearied age;
To drag from Heaven an unrepentant soul
Which might have quenched in reconciling prayers
A life of burning crimes . . .

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ORSINO.

You cannot say
I urged you to the deed.

GIACOMO.

O, had I never
Found in thy smooth and ready countenance
The mirror of my darkest thoughts; hadst thou
Never with hints and questions made me look
Upon the monster of my thought, until
It grew familiar to desire...

ORSINO.

'Tis thus
Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts
Upon the abettors of their own resolve;
Or any thing but their weak, guilty selves.
And yet, confess the truth, it is the peril
In which you stand that gives you this pale sickness
Of penitence; Confess 'tis fear disguised
From its own shame that takes the mantle now
Of thin remorse. What if we yet were safe?

GIACOMO.

How can that be? Already Beatrice,
Lucretia and the murderer are in prison.
I doubt not officers are, whilst we speak,
Sent to arrest us.

ORSINO.

I have all prepared
For instant flight. We can escape even now,
So we take fleet occasion by the hair.

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GIACOMO.

Rather expire in tortures, as I may.
What! will you cast by self-accusing flight
Assured conviction upon Beatrice?
She, who alone in this unnatural work,
Stands like God's angel ministered upon
By fiends; avenging such a nameless wrong
As turns black parricide to piety;
Whilst we for basest ends . . . I fear, Orsino,
While I consider all your words and looks,
Comparing them with your proposal now,
That you must be a villain. For what end
Could you engage in such a perilous crime,
Training me on with hints, and signs, and smiles,
Even to this gulph? Thou art no liar? No,
Thou art a lie! Traitor and murderer!
Coward and slave! But, no, defend thyself;
(*drawing.*)
Let the sword speak what the indignant tongue
Disdains to brand thee with.

ORSINO.

Put up your weapon.
Is it the desperation of your fear
Makes you thus rash and sudden with a[1] friend,
Now ruined for your sake? If honest anger
Have moved you, know, that what I just proposed
Was but to try you. As for me, I think,
Thankless affection led me to this point,
From which, if my firm temper could repent,
I cannot now recede. Even whilst we speak
The ministers of justice wait below:

[1] So in both Shelley's editions; but in Mrs. Shelley's editions of 1839 we read *with your friend*. Mr. Rossetti reverts to *a friend*.

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They grant me these brief moments. Now if you
Have any word of melancholy comfort
To speak to your pale wife, 'twere best to pass
Out at the postern, and avoid them so.

GIACOMO.

O, generous friend! How canst thou pardon me?
Would that my life could purchase thine!

ORSINO.

That wish
Now comes a day too late. Haste; fare thee well!
Hear'st thou not steps along the corridor?

(*Exit* GIACOMO.)

I'm sorry for it; but the guards are waiting
At his own gate, and such was my contrivance
That I might rid me both of him and them.
I thought to act a solemn comedy
Upon the painted scene of this new world,
And to attain my own peculiar ends
By some such plot of mingled good and ill
As others weave; but there arose a Power
Which grasped and snapped the threads of my device
And turned it to a net of ruin . . . Ha!

(*a shout is heard.*)

Is that my name I hear proclaimed abroad?
But I will pass, wrapt in a vile disguise;
Rags on my back, and a false innocence
Upon my face, thro' the misdeeming crowd
Which judges by what seems. 'Tis easy then
For a new name and for a country new,
And a new life, fashioned on old desires,
To change the honours of abandoned Rome.
And these must be the masks of that within,

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Which must remain unaltered... Oh, I fear
That what is past will never let me rest!
Why, when none else is conscious, but myself,
Of my misdeeds, should my own heart's contempt
Trouble me? Have I not the power to fly
My own reproaches? Shall I be the slave
Of... what? A word? which those of this false world
Employ against each other, not themselves;
As men wear daggers not for self-offence.
But if I am mistaken, where shall I
Find the disguise to hide me from myself,
As now I skulk from every other eye?

(*Exit.*)

SCENE II.

A HALL OF JUSTICE. CAMILLO, JUDGES &C. ARE DISCOVERED SEATED; MARZIO IS LED IN.

FIRST JUDGE.

Accused, do you persist in your denial?
I ask you, are you innocent, or guilty?
I demand who were the participators
In your offence? Speak truth and the whole truth.

MARZIO.

My God! I did not kill him; I know nothing;
Olimpio sold the robe to me from which
You would infer my guilt.

SECOND JUDGE.

Away with him!

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FIRST JUDGE.

Dare you, with lips yet white from the rack's kiss
Speak false? Is it so soft a questioner,
That you would bandy lover's talk with it
Till it wind out your life and soul? Away!

MARZIO.

Spare me! O, spare! I will confess.

FIRST JUDGE.

Then speak.

MARZIO.

I strangled him in his sleep.

FIRST JUDGE.

Who urged you to it?

MARZIO.

His own son Giacomo, and the young prelate
Orsino sent me to Petrella; there
The ladies Beatrice and Lucretia
Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I
And my companion forthwith murdered him.
Now let me die.

FIRST JUDGE.

This sounds as bad as truth. Guards, there,
Lead forth the prisoners!

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE *and* GIACOMO, *guarded.*

Look upon this man;
When did you see him last?

BEATRICE.

We never saw him.

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MARZIO.

You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.[1]

BEATRICE.

I know thee! How? where? when?

MARZIO.

You know 'twas I
Whom you did urge with menaces and bribes
To kill your father. When the thing was done
You clothed me in a robe of woven gold
And bade me thrive: how I have thriven, you see.
You, my Lord Giacomo, Lady Lucretia,
You know that what I speak is true.

(BEATRICE *advances towards him; he covers his face, and shrinks back.*)

O, dart
The terrible resentment of those eyes
On the dead[2] earth! Turn them away from me!
They wound: 'twas torture forced the truth. My Lords,
Having said this let me be led to death.

BEATRICE.

Poor wretch, I pity thee: yet stay awhile.

[1] This passage of dialogue, though imperfect in the fall of the lines, is, I imagine, as Shelley meant it to be. Mr. Rossetti, however, "methodizes" the lines thus:

First Judge. This sounds as bad as truth. Guards there, lead forth the prisoners.
Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, *and* GIACOMO, *guarded.*
Look upon
This man. When did you see him last?
Beatrice. We never
Saw him.
Marzio. You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.

To me the passage is anything but improved; and I suspect it is a mere accident that, by packing the last line, the re-arrangement is possible.

[2] So in both Shelley's editions, and in Mr. Rossetti's; but Mrs. Shelley's reads *dread* for *dead*. There can be no possible doubt that *dead* is the right word,—the dead earth, which could not be wounded and tortured, as Marzio was, by the gaze of Beatrice. The thought corresponds precisely with that in Beatrice's speech further on,

He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends
His gaze on the blind earth.

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CAMILLO.

Guards, lead him not away.

BEATRICE.

Cardinal Camillo,
You have a good repute for gentleness
And wisdom: can it be that you sit here
To countenance a wicked farce like this?
When some obscure and trembling slave is dragged
From sufferings which might shake the sternest heart
And bade to answer, not as he believes,
But as those may suspect or do desire
Whose questions thence suggest their own reply:
And that in peril of such hideous torments
As merciful God spares even the damned. Speak now
The thing you surely know, which is that you,
If your fine frame were stretched upon that wheel,
And you were told: "Confess that you did poison
Your little nephew; that fair blue-eyed child
Who was the loadstar of your life:"—and though
All see, since his most swift and piteous death,
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,
And all the things hoped for or done therein
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief,
Yet you would say, "I confess any thing:"
And beg from your tormentors, like that slave,
The refuge of dishonourable death.
I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert
My innocence.

CAMILLO (*much moved*).

What shall we think, my Lords?
Shame on these tears! I thought the heart was frozen

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Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul
That she is guiltless.

JUDGE.

Yet she must be tortured.

CAMILLO.

I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew[1]
(If he now lived he would be just her age;
His hair, too, was her colour, and his eyes
Like her's in shape, but blue and not so deep)
As that most perfect image of God's love
That ever came sorrowing upon the earth.
She is as pure as speechless infancy!

JUDGE.

Well, be her purity on your head, my Lord,
If you forbid the rack. His Holiness
Enjoined us to pursue this monstrous crime
By the severest forms of law; nay even
To stretch a point against the criminals.
The prisoners stand accused of parricide
Upon such evidence as justifies
Torture.

BEATRICE.

What evidence? This man's?

JUDGE.

Even so.

BEATRICE (*to* MARZIO).

Come near. And who art thou thus chosen forth

[1] In Shelley's two editions there is a colon at *nephew*, probably placed there before it had occurred to him to use a parenthesis, and accidentally left standing there.

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Out of the multitude of living men
To kill the innocent?

MARZIO.

I am Marzio,
Thy father's vassal.

BEATRICE.

Fix thine eyes on mine;
Answer to what I ask.
(*turning to the Judges*)
I prithee mark
His countenance: unlike bold calumny
Which sometimes dares not speak the thing it looks,
He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends
His gaze on the blind earth.
(*to* MARZIO)
What! wilt thou say
That I did murder my own father?

MARZIO.

Oh!
Spare me! My brain swims round... I cannot speak...
It was that horrid torture forced the truth.
Take me away! Let her not look on me!
I am a guilty miserable wretch;
I have said all I know; now, let me die!

BEATRICE.

My Lords, if by my nature I had been
So stern, as to have planned the crime alleged,
Which your suspicions dictate to this slave,
And the rack makes him utter, do you think
I should have left this two-edged instrument
Of my misdeed; this man, this bloody knife

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With my own name engraven on the heft,
Lying unsheathed amid a world of foes,
For my own death? That with such horrible need
For deepest silence, I should have neglected
So trivial a precaution, as the making
His tomb the keeper of a secret written
On a thief's memory? What is his poor life?
What are a thousand lives? A parricide
Had trampled them like dust; and, see, he lives!

(*turning to* MARZIO)

And thou . . .

MARZIO.

Oh, spare me! Speak to me no more!
That stern yet piteous look, those solemn tones,
Wound worse than torture.

(*to the Judges*)

I have told it all;
For pity's sake lead me away to death.

CAMILLO.

Guards, lead him nearer the Lady Beatrice,
He shrinks from her regard like autumn's leaf
From the keen breath of the serenest north.

BEATRICE.

Oh, thou who tremblest on the giddy verge
Of life and death, pause ere thou answerest me;
So mayst thou answer God with less dismay:
What evil have we done thee? I, alas!
Have lived but on this earth a few sad years
And so my lot was ordered, that a father
First turned the moments of awakening life

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To drops, each poisoning youth's sweet hope; and then
Stabbed with one blow my everlasting soul;
And my untainted fame; and even that peace
Which sleeps within the core of the heart's heart;
But the wound was not mortal; so my hate
Became the only worship I could lift
To our great father, who in pity and love,
Armed thee, as thou dost say, to cut him off;
And thus his wrong becomes my accusation;
And art thou the accuser? If thou hopest
Mercy in heaven, shew justice upon earth:
Worse than a bloody hand is a hard heart.
If thou hast done murders, made thy life's path
Over the trampled laws of God and man,
Rush not before thy Judge, and say: "My maker,
"I have done this and more; for there was one
"Who was most pure and innocent on earth;
"And because she endured what never any
"Guilty or innocent endured before:
"Because her wrongs could not be told, not thought;
"Because thy hand at length did rescue her;
"I with my words killed her and all her kin."
Think, I adjure you, what it is to slay
The reverence living in the minds of men
Towards our ancient house, and stainless fame!
Think what it is to strangle infant pity,
Cradled in the belief of guileless looks,
Till it become a crime to suffer. Think
What 'tis to blot with infamy and blood
All that which shews like innocence, and is,
Hear me, great God! I swear, most innocent,
So that the world lose all discrimination
Between the sly, fierce, wild regard of guilt,
And that which now compels thee to reply
To what I ask: Am I, or am I not

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A parricide?

MARZIO.

Thou art not!

JUDGE.

What is this?

MARZIO.

I here declare those whom I did accuse
Are innocent. 'Tis I alone am guilty.

JUDGE.

Drag him away to torments; let them be
Subtle and long drawn out, to tear the folds
Of the heart's inmost cell. Unbind him not
Till he confess.

MARZIO.

Torture me as ye will:
A keener pain[1] has wrung a higher truth
From my last breath. She is most innocent!
Bloodhounds, not men, glut yourselves well with me;
I will not give you that fine piece of nature
To rend and ruin.

(*Exit* MARZIO, *guarded.*)

CAMILLO.

What say ye now, my Lords?

JUDGE.

Let tortures strain the truth till it be white

[1] In the first edition we read *a keener pain*, in the second, *a keener pang*,—a variation which commends itself to me as probably Shelley's own. Mrs. Shelley, however, adheres to the first edition.

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As snow thrice sifted by the frozen wind.

CAMILLO.

Yet stained with blood.

JUDGE (*to* BEATRICE).

Know you this paper, Lady?

BEATRICE.

Entrap me not with questions. Who stands here
As my accuser? Ha! wilt thou be he,
Who art my judge? Accuser, witness, judge,
What, all in one? Here is Orsino's name;
Where is Orsino? Let his eye meet mine.
What means this scrawl? Alas! Ye know not what,
And therefore on the chance that it may be
Some evil, will ye kill us?

Enter an Officer.

OFFICER.

Marzio's dead.

JUDGE.

What did he say?

OFFICER.

Nothing. As soon as we
Had bound him on the wheel, he smiled on us,
As one who baffles a deep adversary;
And holding his breath, died.

JUDGE.

There remains nothing
But to apply the question to those prisoners,

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Who yet remain stubborn.

CAMILLO.

I overrule
Further proceedings, and in the behalf
Of these most innocent and noble persons
Will use my interest with the Holy Father.

JUDGE.

Let the Pope's pleasure then be done. Meanwhile
Conduct these culprits each to separate cells;
And be the engines ready: for this night
If the Pope's resolution be as grave,
Pious, and just as once, I'll wring the truth
Out of those nerves and sinews, groan by groan.
(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

THE CELL OF A PRISON. BEATRICE IS DISCOVERED ASLEEP ON A COUCH; ENTER BERNARDO.

BERNARDO.

How gently slumber rests upon her face,
Like the last thoughts of some day sweetly spent
Closing in night and dreams, and so prolonged.
After such torments as she bore last night,
How light and soft her breathing comes. Ay, me![1]
Methinks that I shall never sleep again.

[1] *Ay, me!* in Shelley's editions; but there can be no authority for the change. *Ah, me!* in Mrs. Shelley's. Surely

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But I must shake the heavenly dew of rest
From this sweet folded flower, thus... wake! awake!
What, sister, canst thou sleep?

BEATRICE (*awaking*).

I was just dreaming
That we were all in Paradise. Thou knowest
This cell seems like a kind of Paradise
After our father's presence.

BERNARDO.

Dear, dear sister,
Would that thy dream were not a dream! O, God!
How shall I tell?

BEATRICE.

What wouldst thou tell, sweet brother?

BERNARDO.

Look not so calm and happy, or even whilst
I stand considering what I have to say
My heart will break.

BEATRICE.

See now, thou mak'st me weep:
How very friendless thou wouldst be, dear child,
If I were dead. Say what thou hast to say.

BERNARDO.

They have confessed; they could endure no more
The tortures...

BEATRICE.

Ha! What was there to confess?

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They must have told some weak and wicked lie
To flatter their tormentors. Have they said
That they were guilty? O, white innocence,
That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide
Thine awful and serenest countenance
From those who know thee not!

Enter JUDGE *with* LUCRETIA *and* GIACOMO, *guarded.*

Ignoble hearts!
For some brief spasms of pain, which are at least
As mortal as the limbs through which they pass,
Are centuries of high splendour laid in dust?
And that eternal honour which should live
Sunlike, above the reek of mortal fame,
Changed to a mockery and a bye-word? What!
Will you give up these bodies to be dragged
At horses'[1] heels, so that our hair should sweep
The footsteps of the vain and senseless crowd,
Who, that they may make our calamity
Their worship and their spectacle, will leave
The churches and the theatres as void
As their own hearts? Shall the light multitude
Fling, at their choice, curses or faded pity,
Sad funeral flowers to deck a living corpse,
Upon us as we pass to pass away,
And leave... what memory of our having been?
Infamy, blood, terror, despair? O thou,
Who wert a mother to the parentless,
Kill not thy child! Let not her wrongs kill thee!
Brother, lie down with me upon the rack,
And let us each be silent as a corpse;
It soon will be as soft as any grave.
'Tis but the falsehood it can wring from fear

[1] In the first edition, *horse's.*

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Makes the rack cruel.

GIACOMO.

They will tear the truth
Even from thee at last, those cruel pains:
For pity's sake say thou art guilty now.

LUCRETIA.

O, speak the truth! Let us all quickly die;
And after death, God is our judge, not they;
He will have mercy on us.

BERNARDO.

If indeed
It can be true, say so, dear sister mine;
And then the Pope will surely pardon you,
And all be well.

JUDGE.

Confess, or I will warp
Your limbs with such keen tortures...

BEATRICE.

Tortures! Turn
The rack henceforth into a spinning wheel!
Torture your dog, that he may tell when last
He lapped the blood his master shed... not me!
My pangs are of the mind, and of the heart,
And of the soul; aye, of the inmost soul,
Which weeps within tears as of burning gall
To see, in this ill world where none are true,
My kindred false to their deserted selves.
And with considering all the wretched life
Which I have lived, and its now wretched end,
And the small justice shewn by Heaven and Earth

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To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art,
And what slaves these; and what a world we make,
The oppressor and the oppressed .... such pangs compel
My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me?

JUDGE.

Art thou not guilty of thy father's death?

BEATRICE.

Or wilt thou rather tax high judging God
That he permitted such an act as that
Which I have suffered, and which he beheld;
Made it unutterable, and took from it
All refuge, all revenge, all consequence,
But that which thou hast called my father's death?
Which is or is not what men call a crime,
Which either I have done; or have not done;
Say what ye will. I shall deny no more.
If ye desire it thus, thus let it be,
And so an end of all. Now do your will;
No other pains shall force another word.

JUDGE.

She is convicted, but has not confessed.
Be it enough. Until their final sentence
Let none have converse with them. You, young Lord,
Linger not here!

BEATRICE.

O, tear him not away!

JUDGE.

Guards do your duty.

BERNARDO (*Embracing* BEATRICE).

Oh! would ye divide

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Body from soul?

OFFICER.

That is the headsman's business.

(*Exeunt all but* LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, *and* GIACOMO.)

GIACOMO.

Have I confessed? Is it all over now?
No hope! No refuge! O, weak, wicked tongue
Which hast destroyed me would that thou hadst been
Cut out and thrown to dogs first![1] To have killed
My father first, and then betrayed my sister;
Aye, thee! the one thing innocent and pure
In this black guilty world, to that which I
So well deserve! My wife! my little ones!
Destitute, helpless, and I... Father! God!
Canst thou forgive even the unforgiving,
When their full hearts break thus, thus!..

(*Covers his face and weeps*)

LUCRETIA.

O, my child!
To what a dreadful end are we all come!
Why did I yield? Why did I not sustain
Those torments? Oh, that I were all dissolved
Into these fast and unavailing tears,
Which flow and feel not!

BEATRICE.

What 'twas weak to do,
'Tis weaker to lament, once being done;

[1] In Shelley's two editions there is a note of interrogation at *first*,—obviously a typographical error. Mrs. Shelley rightly substitutes a note of exclamation.

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Take cheer! The God who knew my wrong, and made
Our speedy act the angel of his wrath,
Seems, and but seems to have abandoned us.
Let us not think that we shall die for this.
Brother, sit near me; give me your firm hand,
You had a manly heart. Bear up! Bear up!
O, dearest Lady, put your gentle head
Upon my lap, and try to sleep awhile:
Your eyes look pale, hollow and overworn,
With heaviness of watching and slow grief.
Come, I will sing you some low, sleepy tune,
Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing,
Some outworn and unused monotony,
Such as our country gossips sing and spin,
Till they almost forget they live: lie down!
So, that will do. Have I forgot the words?
Faith! They are sadder than I thought they were.

SONG.

False friend, wilt thou smile or weep
When my life is laid asleep?
Little cares for a smile or a tear,
The clay-cold corpse upon the bier!
Farewell! Heigho!
What is this whispers low?
There is a snake in thy smile, my dear;
And bitter poison within thy tear.

Sweet sleep, were death like to thee,
Or if thou couldst mortal be,
I would close these eyes of pain;
When to wake? Never again.
O, World! Farewell!
Listen to the passing bell!

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It says, thou and I must part,
With a light and a heavy heart.

(*The scene closes.*)

SCENE IV.

A HALL OF THE PRISON. ENTER CAMILLO AND BERNARDO.

CAMILLO.

The Pope is stern; not to be moved or bent.
He looked as calm and keen as is the engine
Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself
From aught that it inflicts; a marble form,
A rite, a law, a custom: not a man.
He frowned, as if to frown had been the trick
Of his machinery, on the advocates
Presenting the defences, which he tore
And threw behind, muttering with hoarse, harsh voice:
"Which among ye defended their old father
"Killed in his sleep?" Then to another: "Thou
"Dost this in virtue of thy place; 'tis well."
He turned to me then, looking deprecation,
And said these three words, coldly: "They must die."

BERNARDO.

And yet you left him not?

CAMILLO.

I urged him still;
Pleading, as I could guess, the devilish wrong
Which prompted your unnatural parent's death.

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And he replied: "Paolo Santa Croce
"Murdered his mother yester evening,
"And he is fled. Parricide grows so rife
"That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young
"Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs.
"Authority, and power, and hoary hair
"Are grown crimes capital. You are my nephew,
"You come to ask their pardon; stay a moment;
"Here is their sentence; never see me more
"Till, to the letter, it be all fulfilled."

BERNARDO.

O, God, not so! I did believe indeed
That all you said was but sad preparation
For happy news. O, there are words and looks
To bend the sternest purpose! Once I knew them,
Now I forget them at my dearest need.
What think you if I seek him out, and bathe
His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears?
Importune him with prayers, vexing his brain
With my perpetual cries, until in rage
He strike me with his pastoral cross, and trample
Upon my prostrate head, so that my blood
May stain the senseless dust on which he treads,
And remorse waken mercy? I will do it!
O, wait till I return!

(*rushes out.*)

CAMILLO.

Alas! poor boy!
A wreck-devoted seaman thus might pray
To the deaf sea.

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE *and* GIACOMO, *guarded.*

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BEATRICE.

I hardly dare to fear
That thou bring'st other news than a just pardon.

CAMILLO.

May God in heaven be less inexorable
To the Pope's prayers, than he has been to mine.
Here is the sentence and the warrant.

BEATRICE (*wildly*).

Oh,
My God! Can it be possible I have
To die so suddenly? So young to go
Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground!
To be nailed down into a narrow place;
To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more
Blithe voice of living thing; muse not again
Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost—
How fearful! to be nothing! Or to be...
What? O, where am I? Let me not go mad!
Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts! If there should be
No God, no Heaven, no Earth in the void world;
The wide, grey, lampless, deep, unpeopled world!
If all things then should be... my father's spirit,
His eye, his voice, his touch surrounding me;
The atmosphere and breath of my dead life!
If sometimes, as a shape more like himself,
Even the form which tortured me on earth,
Masked in grey hairs and wrinkles, he should come
And wind me in his hellish arms, and fix
His eyes on mine, and drag me down, down, down!
For was he not alone omnipotent
On Earth, and ever present? Even tho' dead,
Does not his spirit live in all that breathe,

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And work for me and mine still the same ruin,
Scorn, pain, despair? Who ever yet returned
To teach the laws of death's untrodden realm?
Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now,
O, whither, whither?

LUCRETIA.

Trust in God's sweet love,
The tender promises of Christ: ere night,
Think we shall be in Paradise.

BEATRICE.

'Tis past!
Whatever comes my heart shall sink no more.
And yet, I know not why, your words strike chill:
How tedious, false and cold seem all things. I
Have met with much injustice in this world;
No difference has been made by God or man,
Or any power moulding my wretched lot,
'Twixt good or evil, as regarded me.
I am cut off from the only world I know,
From light, and life, and love, in youth's sweet prime.
You do well telling me to trust in God,
I hope I do trust in him. In whom else
Can any trust? And yet my heart is cold.

(*During the latter speeches* GIACOMO *has retired conversing with* CAMILLO, *who now goes out;* GIACOMO *advances.*)

GIACOMO.

Know you not, Mother . . . Sister, know you not?
Bernardo even now is gone to implore
The Pope to grant our pardon.

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LUCRETIA.

Child, perhaps
It will be granted. We may all then live
To make these woes a tale for distant years:
O, what a thought! It gushes to my heart
Like the warm blood.

BEATRICE.

Yet both will soon be cold.
O, trample out that thought! Worse than despair,
Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope:
It is the only ill which can find place
Upon the giddy, sharp and narrow hour
Tottering beneath us. Plead with the swift frost
That it should spare the eldest flower of spring:
Plead with awakening earthquake, o'er whose couch
Even now a city stands, strong, fair and free;
Now stench and blackness yawn,[1] like death. O, plead
With famine, or wind-walking Pestilence,
Blind lightning, or the deaf sea, not with man!
Cruel, cold, formal man; righteous in words,
In deeds a Cain. No, Mother, we must die:
Since such is the reward of innocent lives;
Such the alleviation of worst wrongs.
And whilst our murderers live, and hard, cold men,
Smiling and slow, walk thro' a world of tears
To death as to life's sleep; 'twere just the grave
Were some strange joy for us. Come, obscure Death,
And wind me in thine all-embracing arms!
Like a fond mother hide me in thy bosom,
And rock me to the sleep from which none wake.
Live ye, who live, subject to one another
As we were once, who now . . .

[1] In the first edition and those of Mrs. Shelley we read *yawns*; in the second edition *yawn*,—a correction for which we must give Shelley credit.

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BERNARDO *rushes in.*

BERNARDO.

Oh, horrible!
That tears, that looks, that hope poured forth in prayer,
Even till the heart is vacant and despairs,
Should all be vain! The ministers of death
Are waiting round the doors. I thought I saw
Blood on the face of one . . . what if 'twere fancy?
Soon the heart's blood of all I love on earth
Will sprinkle him, and he will wipe it off
As if 'twere only rain. O, life! O, world!
Cover me! let me be no more! To see
That perfect mirror of pure innocence
Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good,
Shivered to dust! To see thee, Beatrice,
Who made all lovely thou didst look upon . . .
Thee, light of life . . . dead, dark! while I say, sister,
To hear I have no sister; and thou, Mother,
Whose love was as a bond to all our loves . . .[1]
Dead! The sweet bond broken!

Enter CAMILLO *and Guards.*

They come! Let me
Kiss those warm lips before their crimson leaves
Are blighted . . . white . . . cold. Say farewell, before
Death chokes that gentle voice! O, let me hear
You speak!

BEATRICE.

Farewell, my tender brother. Think

[1] This line is so unlike Shelley in its defectiveness as given in all editions known to me except those of Mr. Rossetti and Mr. W. B. Scott,—

Whose love was a bond to all our loves,—

so like him in its perfection with the word *as* inserted before *a bond*, that I have no doubt whatever that he wrote or meant to write it so, and no hesitation in following Mr. Rossetti. Compare this line with the line

Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow,

in the next speech.

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Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now:
And let mild, pitying thoughts lighten for thee
Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,
But tears and patience. One thing more, my child,
For thine own sake be constant to the love
Thou bearest us; and to the faith that I,
Tho' wrapt in a strange cloud of crime and shame,
Lived ever holy and unstained. And tho'
Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name
Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow
For men to point at as they pass, do thou
Forbear, and never think a thought unkind
Of those, who perhaps love thee in their graves.
So mayest thou die as I do; fear and pain
Being subdued. Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!

BERNARDO.

I cannot say, farewell!

CAMILLO.

O, Lady Beatrice!

BEATRICE.

Give yourself no unnecessary pain,
My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, Mother, tie
My girdle for me, and bind up this hair
In any simple knot; aye, that does well.
And yours I see is coming down. How often
Have we done this for one another; now
We shall not do it any more. My Lord,
We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well.

THE END

[OF THE CENCI.]

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[Shelley's note on the Niobe, at Florence, first published in *The Athenæum* for the 15th of September 1832, has passages which are highly suggestive of the majestic pathos of the close of *The Cenci*. Not only does he strike the key-note of his own last scene when he says of the Niobe that "It seems as if despair and beauty had combined and produced nothing but the sublime loveliness of grief"; but in Beatrice's last utterance to her mother we have the same tender thought that he uses in criticism on the group of Niobe and her daughter: "The child is clothed in a thin tunic of delicatest woof, and her hair is gathered on her head into a knot, probably by that mother whose care will never gather it again."—H. B. F.]

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PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

&c &c

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[It would seem that a considerable portion of *Prometheus Unbound* was written in 1818. In an undated letter to Mrs. Shelley written from Padua to her at Este, apparently in September of that year, Shelley asks her to "bring the sheets" of that poem, which she "will find numbered from one to twenty-six on the table of the pavilion"; and in a letter to Peacock dated "Este, October 8, 1818," he says, "I have been writing—and indeed have just finished the first act of a lyric and classical drama, to be called *Prometheus Unbound*." According to Mrs. Shelley he had meditated upon the subject, and written portions during his Italian travels between the final departure from England in the Spring of 1818 and the settlement at Rome in March, 1819, and only in the Spring of 1819 began to give his undivided attention to it. Then, at all events, in the Baths of Caracalla, the first three acts were completed, before *The Cenci* was composed: he mentions *Prometheus* as "just finished"—in a letter to Peacock dated 6 April, 1819,—wherein he says, "I think the execution is better than any of my former attempts." This letter, of course, refers to the three acts only; for, as Mrs. Shelley says in her note on *Prometheus*, "it was not till several months after, when at Florence, that he conceived a fourth act . . . ought to be added"; and this was not finished till near the end of December, 1819. In a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne, dated "Pisa, May 26th, 1820," in accepting an offer made by them to correct the proof-sheets, he adds, "I enclose you two little papers of corrections and additions,—I do not think you will find any difficulty in interpolating them into their proper places." But on July 12th, 1820, he writes to Peacock (*Fraser's Magazine*, March 1860, p. 313), "I make bold to write to you on the news that you are correcting my *Prometheus*, for which I return thanks." The Poem was published, with nine smaller poems (see title-page and contents, reproduced opposite), about August 1820, in an octavo volume, consisting of fly-title *Prometheus Unbound &c &c*, title, contents, preface pp. VII to XV, fly-title *Prometheus Unbound* with *dramatis personæ*, and text pp. 19 to 222, including the fly-title *Miscellaneous Poems*. The first fly-title has on the back advertisements of *The Cenci*, *The Revolt of Islam*, *Rosalind and Helen &c.*, and *Alastor*, and an imprint, "Marchant, Printer, Ingram-Court, Fenchurch-Street, London." The contents is usually a "cancel-leaf." There are two pages of Ollier's miscellaneous advertisements at the end of the book, including one of the *Six Weeks' Tour*, and ending with three announcements of forthcoming works, the last of which, anonymous, is "JULIAN and MADDALO, and other Poems." In a letter to Mr. Ollier dated "Pisa, November 10th, 1820," Shelley says of *Prometheus &c.*: "It is to be regretted that the errors of the press are so numerous, and in many respects so destructive of the sense of a species of poetry which, I fear, even without this disadvantage, few will understand or like. I shall send you the list of errata in a day or two." He does not seem to have sent it till the 20th of January 1821,—in a letter printed in the *Shelley Memorials*, but there misplaced and dated 1820: he refers to it as "a formidable list." Mrs. Shelley seems to have recovered it from Mr. Ollier, as she says in the note on *Prometheus*, in her first collected edition, "the verbal alterations in this edition of Prometheus are made from a list of errata, written by Shelley himself." This we must understand with a reservation to allow for errors of the press in her own edition. In Shelley's edition the names of the speakers are sometimes given in full, at others abbreviated, sometimes placed over the centre of the speech, at others at the beginning of the first line: here, as in *The Cenci*, I have followed Mrs. Shelley in giving every name in full over the centre of the speech. A great part of the MS. of *Prometheus*, carefully written, is in the possession of Sir Percy Shelley; and an account of some of the variations shewn by it was given in *The Westminster Review* for July, 1870.—H. B. F.]

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PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

A LYRICAL DRAMA

IN FOUR ACTS

WITH OTHER POEMS

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

AUDISNE HÆC AMPHIARAE, SUB TERRAM ABDITE?

LONDON
C AND J OLLIER VERE STREET BOND STREET
1820

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[1] As stated at p. 184 the table of contents is usually a "cancel-leaf." I had thought it possible that it was cancelled on account of some reference to *Julian and Maddalo*, which Mr. Ollier did propose to print in the volume, but Shelley objected. After much search, however, I found the cancelled leaf left in a copy; and the reason of its rejection turned out to be the omission of the letter *c* from the word *miscellaneous*.

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PREFACE.

[BY SHELLEY.]

THE Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The "Prometheus Unbound" of Æschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Æschylus; an ambition, which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of

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the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of Paradise Lost, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous

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awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakspeare are full of instances of the same kind: Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works, (since a higher merit would probably be denied me,) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess

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the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England, has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakspeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and developement of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions

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of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural, and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakspeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

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Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, "a passion for reforming the world:"[1] what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take Æschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents

[1] Mr. Rossetti points out in a note that this phrase is to be found in Forsyth's *Principles of Moral Science*.

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a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.

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PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PROMETHEUS.

DEMOGORGON.

JUPITER.

THE EARTH.

OCEAN.

APOLLO.

MERCURY.

HERCULES.

ASIA
PANTHEA } Oceanides.
IONE

THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON.[1]

SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.

SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAUNS.[2]

FURIES.

[1] No such *dramatis persona* as The Spirit of the Moon is given in this list in Shelley's edition. It was supplied in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839.

[2] In the first edition, *Fawns*.

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PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

ACT I.

SCENE, A RAVINE OF ICY ROCKS IN THE INDIAN CAUCASUS. PROMETHEUS IS DISCOVERED BOUND TO THE PRECIPICE. PANTHEA AND IONE ARE SEATED AT HIS FEET. TIME, NIGHT. DURING THE SCENE, MORNING SLOWLY BREAKS.

PROMETHEUS.

MONARCH of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,

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Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire.[1]
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O, Mighty God!
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing crystâls,[2] the bright chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind:
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.

[1] So in all editions known to me; and perhaps there is no corruption. It is to be remarked that *empire* has to be pronounced as a full trisyllable in order to complete the rhythm; and Shelley has certainly in some cases used similar words with a like value: but it is worth considering whether *empery* was not more likely to have been employed by him in this place.

[2] In Shelley's edition, *chrystals*.

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And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-coloured east; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom
—As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
Disdain! Ah no! I pity thee. What ruin
Will hunt thee undefended thro' the[1] wide Heaven!
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
Whose many-voicèd Echoes, thro'[2] the mist
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering thro' India! Thou serenest Air,
Thro' which the Sun walks burning without beams!
And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poisèd wings
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
The orbèd world! If then my words had power,

[1] Although there is no authority for erasing the word *the*, I have not the slightest doubt that the passage should stand thus:—

What ruin
Will hunt thee undefended thro' wide Heaven!

Rhythm and sense combine to enforce this conclusion: the irregularity of measure is unlike Shelley; he constantly, though not invariably, uses *Heaven* for the empire of the Gods, and *the heaven* when he means merely the sky; and here the reference is surely to the empire from which Jupiter is to be chased. See line 373 of this scene,—

Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,

and also line 46, Scene 4, Act II, where it is said of Jupiter that Prometheus

Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.

[2] Spelt *through* in Shelley's edition, in exception from his general practice.

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Though I am changed so that aught evil wish
Is dead within; although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!
What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

FIRST VOICE: FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

Thrice three hundred thousand years
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood:
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
We trembled in our multitude.

SECOND VOICE: FROM THE SPRINGS.

Thunder-bolts had parched our water,
We had been stained with bitter blood,
And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter,
Thro' a city and a solitude.

THIRD VOICE: FROM THE AIR.

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
Its wastes in colours not their own,
And oft had my serene repose
Been cloven by many a rending groan.

FOURTH VOICE: FROM THE WHIRLWINDS.

We had soared beneath these mountains
Unresting ages; nor had thunder,
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
Nor any power above or under
Ever made us mute with wonder.

FIRST VOICE.

But never bowed our snowy crest
As at the voice of thine unrest.

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SECOND VOICE.

Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.
A pilot asleep on the howling sea
Leaped up from the deck in agony,
And heard, and cried, "Ah, woe is me!"
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

THIRD VOICE.

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
My still realm was never riven:
When its wound was closed, there stood
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

FOURTH VOICE.

And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin
To frozen caves our flight pursuing
Made us keep silence—thus—and thus—
Though silence is a[1] hell to us.

THE EARTH.

The tongueless Caverns of the craggy hills
Cried, 'Misery!' then; the hollow Heaven replied,
'Misery!' And the Ocean's purple waves,
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,
And the pale nations heard it, 'Misery!'

PROMETHEUS.

I hear a sound of voices: not the voice
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou

[1] In Mrs. Shelley's editions of 1839 this line reads

Though silence is *as* hell to us.

Mr. Rossetti reverts to the reading of Shelley's edition, as given above; and I suspect that this change of Mrs. Shelley's was accidental rather than based on Shelley's list of errata.

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Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist
Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
The Titan? He who made his agony
The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?
Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams,
Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,
Thro' whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered once
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;
Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
To commune with me? me alone, who checked,[1]
As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,
The falsehood and the force of him who reigns
Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:
Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

THE EARTH.

They dare not.

PROMETHEUS.

Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.
Ha, what an awful whisper rises up!
'Tis scarce like sound: it tingles thro' the frame
As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.
Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice
I only know that thou art moving near
And love.[2] How cursed I him?

[1] In Shelley's edition, *check'd*.

[2] I give this passage exactly as in the original edition and in Mrs. Shelley's, as I see no ground for hesitating to accept it as it stands with complete satisfaction. Taking the passage unaltered, Mr. Rossetti says, he understands it to mean "I only know that thou [the Spirit of the Earth] art moving near me, and that Love is also moving near me,"—a sense with which Mr. Rossetti is very properly dissatisfied, as he also is with the verbal emendation *lov'st* for *love*, which he proposes and rejects. Another emendation which he pro-

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THE EARTH.

How canst thou hear
Who knowest not the language of the dead?

PROMETHEUS.

Thou art a living spirit: speak as they.

THE EARTH.

I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell King
Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain
More torturing than the one whereon I roll.
Subtle thou art and good, and tho' the Gods
Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God
Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken now.

PROMETHEUS.

Obscurely thro' my brain, like shadows dim,
Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;
Yet 'tis not pleasure.

THE EARTH.

No, thou canst not hear:

poses, he characterizes as "too audacious to be intruded into the text":—

I only know that thou art moving near:
And *Jove*—how cursed I him?

Were any change needed, it seems to me that this, though very ingenious, would be ruinously out of place in its stagy abruptness. Mr. Swinburne (*Essays and Studies*, pp. 198-9) also rejects this proposal; but he says it gives us "a reasonable reading in place of one barely explicable," adding that he has always assumed the meaning to be "That thou art moving near, and dost love (me)." The meaning has always seemed to me perfectly obvious and perfectly beautiful, and the expression perfectly admissible,—"I only know that thou art moving near and *I* love"; for surely Shelley would be likely enough to represent Prometheus as feeling a thrill of love on hearing the voice of *his mother*, the Earth, even when that voice is so far disguised that he has to ask whose it is (see line 151): indeed this thought is carried on in the closely subsequent words,

I feel
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;

and I should not have thought there was any need for a note on this passage, had not the two excellent critics referred to demonstrated that need by the interpretations and suggestions offered.

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Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
Only to those who die.

PROMETHEUS.

And what art thou,
O, melancholy Voice?

THE EARTH.

I am the Earth,
Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air,
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust,
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
Around us: their inhabitants beheld
My sphered light wane in wide Heaven; the sea
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown;
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;
Blue thistles bloomed in cities; ~~foodless toads~~
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled:
When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm,
And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree;
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry
With grief; and the thin air, my breath, was stained
With the contagion of a mother's hate

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Breathed on her child's destroyer; aye, I heard
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not,
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,
Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,
And the inarticulate people of the dead,
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words
But dare not speak them.

PROMETHEUS.

Venerable mother!
All else who live and suffer take from thee
Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,
And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine.
But mine own words, I pray, deny me not.

THE EARTH.

They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,
The Magus Zoroaster, my dead[1] child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
For know there are two worlds of life and death:
One that which thou beholdest; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live
Till death unite them and they part no more;
Dreams and the light imaginings of men,
And all that faith creates or love desires,
Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.

[1] Mr. Rossetti, in pointing out that *dead* is the word here in the first edition, says that *dear* is "in subsequent issues." *Dead*, however, is printed in Mrs. Shelley's two editions of 1839; so that the emendation *dear* has not, as might be inferred from the expression "subsequent issues," any claim to be considered as authorized by that list of Errata in Shelley's writing which his widow had before her in 1839. I think there can be no doubt that *dead* is right.

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There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,
'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods
Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,
Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts;
And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;
And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
The curse which all remember. Call at will
Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin
Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.
Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge
Of the Supreme may sweep thro' vacant shades,
As rainy wind thro' the abandoned gate
Of a fallen palace.

PROMETHEUS.

Mother, let not aught
Of that which may be evil, pass again
My lips, or those of aught resembling me.
Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear!

IONE.

My wings are folded o'er mine ears:
My wings are crossèd o'er mine eyes:
Yet thro' their silver shade appears,
And thro' their lulling plumes arise,
A Shape, a throng of sounds;
May it be no ill to thee
O thou of many wounds!
Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
Ever thus we watch and wake.

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PANTHEA.

The sound is of whirlwind underground,
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;
The shape is awful like the sound,
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.
A sceptre of pale gold
To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud
His veinèd hand doth hold.
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

PHANTASM OF JUPITER.

Why have the secret powers of this strange world
Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
With which our pallid race hold ghastly[1] talk
In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou?

PROMETHEUS.

Tremendous Image, as thou art must be
He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

THE EARTH.

Listen! And tho' your echoes must be mute,
Grey mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

[1] So in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions; but Mr. Rossetti has suggested *ghostly*, with some shew of reason: I think Shelley might be expected to prefer *ghastly* in this place on account of the polarized meaning of *ghostly* as used in religious parlance; and the word in the MS. is *ghastly*.

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PHANTASM.

A spirit seizes me and speaks within:
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.

PANTHEA.

See, how he lifts his mighty looks, the Heaven
Darkens above.

IONE.

He speaks! O shelter me!

PROMETHEUS.

I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,
Written as on a scroll: yet speak: Oh, speak!

PHANTASM.

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
One only being shalt thou not subdue.
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;
And let alternate frost and fire
Eat into me, and be thine ire
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Aye, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
To blast mankind, from yon ætherial[1] tower.
Let thy malignant spirit move

[1] In Shelley's edition, *ethereal*.

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In darkness over those I love:
On me and mine I imprecate
The utmost torture of thy hate;
And thus devote to sleepless agony,
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O, thou,
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe!
I curse thee! let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;
Till[1] thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony;
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,
Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good;
Both infinite as is the universe,
And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.[2]
An awful image of calm power
Though now thou sittest, let the hour

[1] In the first edition, '*Till*.

[2] This quatrain is given with the punctuation of Shelley's edition and Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839. In her second the full-stop at *solitude* is dropped; but this must be accidental. Mr. Rossetti has printed it thus:

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this curse,
Ill deeds: then be thou damned, beholding
Good
Both infinite as is the universe,
And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude!

He explains "the idea predominant in Shelley's mind" to have been, "beholding both good infinite as is the universe, and beholding also thyself and thy self-torturing solitude"; but he admits that "Shelley, if he *meant* this, did not *say* it"; and he therefore deems it safer to construe "beholding good infinite both as is the universe, and as art thou, and as is thy self-torturing solitude." But if either of these interpretations be correct, Shelley misuses *both*; and it seems to me perfectly clear that *both* refers to good and evil deeds,—"heap ill deeds on thy soul, then be damned beholding good deeds; both good and evil (being) infinite as the universe is, and as thou art, and as thy self-torturing solitude is." Shelley's construction here is not more elliptical than it often is, and the punctuation seems to me both characteristic and sufficient for his purpose.

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Come, when thou must appear to be
That which thou art internally.
And after many a false and fruitless crime
Scorn track thy lagging fall thro' boundless space and time.

PROMETHEUS.

Were these my words, O, Parent?

THE EARTH.

They were thine.

PROMETHEUS.

It doth repent me: words are quick and vain;
Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

THE EARTH.

Misery, Oh misery to me,
That Jove at length should vanquish thee.
Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,
The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.
Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,
Your refuge, your defence lies fallen and vanquishèd.

FIRST ECHO.

Lies fallen and vanquishèd!

SECOND ECHO.

Fallen and vanquishèd!

IONE.

Fear not: 'tis but some passing spasm,
The Titan is unvanquished still.

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But see, where thro' the azure chasm
Of yon forked and snowy hill
Trampling the slant winds on high
With golden-sandalled feet, that glow
Under plumes of purple dye,
Like rose-ensanguined ivory,
A Shape comes now,
Stretching on high from his right hand
A serpent-cinctured wand.

PANTHEA.

'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury.

IONE.

And who are those with hydra tresses
And iron wings that climb the wind,
Whom the frowning God represses
Like vapours steaming up behind,
Clanging loud, an endless crowd—

PANTHEA.

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

IONE.

Are they now led, from the thin dead
On new pangs to be fed?

PANTHEA.

The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

FIRST FURY.

Ha! I scent life!

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SECOND FURY.

Let me but look into his eyes!

THIRD FURY.

The hope of torturing him smells like a heap
Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle.

FIRST FURY.

Darest thou delay, O Herald! take cheer, Hounds
Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon
Should make us food and sport—who can please long
The Omnipotent?

MERCURY.

Back to your towers of iron,
And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail,
Your foodless teeth.[1] Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,
Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:
These shall perform your task.

FIRST FURY.

Oh, mercy! mercy!
We die with our desire: drive us not back!

MERCURY.

Crouch then in silence.

[1] In Shelley's edition this passage is printed thus:

And gnash beside the streams of fire and wail
Your foodless teeth.

The punctuation given in the text is from the MS. in Sir Percy Shelley's possession. Mrs. Shelley put a comma at *fire*, but none at *wail*, thus converting wail from a noun into a verb. In the first edition, there being no points in the passage, either sense might be understood; but the innovation of Mrs. Shelley was not a probable one, as it left *gnash* without an accusative.

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Awful Sufferer
To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
To execute a doom of new revenge.
Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight
Returning, for a season, Heaven seems Hell,[1]
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps
That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have taught
And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms
With the strange might of unimagined pains
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
And my commission is to lead them here,
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends
People the abyss, and leave them to their task.
Be it not so! there is a secret known
To thee, and to none else of living things,
Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,
The fear of which perplexes the Supreme:
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne
In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,
And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart:
For benefits and meek submission tame
The fiercest and the mightiest.

PROMETHEUS.

Evil minds

[1] In Shelley's edition *heaven* and *hell* are in this instance spelt without capitals, in exception to his usual practice.

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Change good to their own nature. I gave all
He has; and in return he chains me here
Years, ages, night and day: whether the Sun
Split my parched skin, or in the moony night
The crystal[1]-winged snow cling round my hair:
Whilst my beloved race is trampled down
By his thought-executing ministers.
Such is the tyrant's[2] recompense: 'tis just:
He who is evil can receive no good;
And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost,
He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude:
He but requites me for his own misdeed.
Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks
With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.
Submission, thou dost know I cannot try:
For what submission but that fatal word,
The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,
Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,
Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield.
Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down
Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,
Enduring thus, the retributive hour
Which since we spake is even nearer now.
But hark, the hell-hounds clamour: fear delay:
Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

MERCURY.

Oh, that we might be spared: I to inflict
And thou to suffer! Once more answer me:

[1] In Shelley's edition, *chrystal-winged.*

[2] In Shelley's edition, *tyrants'.*

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Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?

PROMETHEUS.

I know but this, that it must come.

MERCURY.

Alas!
Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain?

PROMETHEUS.

They last while Jove must reign: nor more, nor less
Do I desire or fear.

MERCURY.

Yet pause, and plunge
Into Eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight,
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless;
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years
Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved?

PROMETHEUS.

Perchance no thought can count them, yet they pass.

MERCURY.

If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the while
Lapped in voluptuous joy?

PROMETHEUS.

I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

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MERCURY.

Alas! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

PROMETHEUS.

Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
As light in the sun, throned: how vain is talk!
Call up the fiends.

IONE.

O, sister, look! White fire
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar;
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind!

MERCURY.

I must obey his words and thine: alas!
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!

PANTHEA.

See where the child of Heaven, with wingèd feet,
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

IONE.

Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes
Lest thou behold and die: they come: they come
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,
And hollow underneath, like death.

FIRST FURY.

Prometheus!

SECOND FURY.

Immortal Titan!

THIRD FURY.

Champion of Heaven's slaves!

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PROMETHEUS.

He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,
Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,
What and who are ye? Never yet there came
Phantasms so foul thro' monster-teeming Hell
From the all-miscreative brain of Jove;
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

FIRST FURY.

We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
And clinging crime; and as lean dogs pursue
Thro' wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,
When the great King betrays them to our will.

PROMETHEUS.

Oh! many fearful natures in one name,
I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know
The darkness and the clangour of your wings.
But why more hideous than your loathèd selves
Gather ye up in legions from the deep?

SECOND FURY.

We knew not that: Sisters, rejoice, rejoice!

PROMETHEUS.

Can aught exult in its deformity?

SECOND FURY.

The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,
Gazing on one another: so are we.

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As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
To gather for her festal crown of flowers
The aerial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
So from our victim's destined agony
The shade which is our form invests us round,
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

PROMETHEUS.

I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

FIRST FURY.

Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone,
And nerve from nerve, working like fire within?

PROMETHEUS.

Pain is my element, as hate is thine;
Ye rend me now: I care not.

SECOND FURY.

Dost imagine
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?

PROMETHEUS.

I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer,
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called
You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

THIRD FURY.

Thou think'st we will live thro' thee, one by one,
Like animal life, and tho' we can obscure not
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
Vexing the self-content of wisest men:
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,

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And foul desire round thine astonished heart,
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins
Crawling like agony.

PROMETHEUS.

Why, ye are thus now;
Yet am I king over myself, and rule
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

CHORUS OF FURIES.

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,
Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth,
Come, come, come!
Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,
When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye
Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,
And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck;
Come, come, come!
Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
Strewed beneath a nation dead;
Leave the hatred, as in ashes
Fire is left for future burning:
It will burst in bloodier flashes
When ye stir it, soon returning:
Leave the self-contempt implanted
In young spirits, sense-enchanted,
Misery's yet unkindled fuel:
Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted
To the maniac dreamer; cruel
More than ye can be with hate
Is he with fear.
Come, come, come!

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We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate
And we burthen the blast of the atmosphere,
But vainly we toil till ye come here.

IONE.

Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

PANTHEA.

These solid mountains quiver with the sound
Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make
The space within my plumes more black than night.

FIRST FURY.[1]

Your call was as a wingèd car
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;
It rapt us from red gulphs of war.

SECOND FURY.

From wide cities, famine-wasted;

THIRD FURY.

Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

FOURTH FURY.

Kingly conclaves stern and cold,
Where blood with gold is bought and sold;

FIFTH FURY.

From the furnace, white and hot,
In which—

[1] Mr. Rossetti attributes these five speeches to Fourth Fury, Fifth Fury, Sixth Fury, Seventh Fury, and Eighth Fury, on the ground that the speakers are "new arrivals, come to the summons contained in the preceding 'Chorus of Furies.'" No doubt they are "new arrivals"; but I do not think that is sufficient ground for the change made. Shelley may have thought it clear enough that the previous speakers were First, Second, and Third Furies of one group, and these First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth of another group.

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A FURY.

Speak not: whisper not:
I know all that ye would tell,
But to speak might break the spell
Which must bend the Invincible,
The stern of thought;
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

FURY.

Tear the veil!

ANOTHER FURY.

It is torn.

CHORUS.

The pale stars of the morn
Shine on a misery, dire to be borne.
Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.
Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for man?
Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,
Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.
One came forth of gentle worth
Smiling on the sanguine earth;
His words outlived him, like swift poison
Withering up truth, peace, and pity.
Look! where round the wide horizon
Many a million-peopled city
Vomits smoke in the bright air.
Mark that outcry of despair!
'Tis his mild and gentle ghost
Wailing for the faith he kindled:
Look again, the flames almost
To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:
The survivors round the embers

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Gather in dread.
Joy, joy, joy!
Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,
And the future is dark, and the present is spread
Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

SEMICHORUS I.

Drops of bloody agony flow
From his white and quivering brow.
Grant a little respite now:
See a disenchanted nation
Springs like day from desolation;
To Truth[1] its state is dedicate,
And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;
A legioned band of linkèd brothers
Whom Love calls children—

SEMICHORUS II.

'Tis another's:
See how kindred murder kin:
'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin:
Blood, like new wine, bubbles within:
Till[2] Despair smothers
The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.

[*All the* FURIES *vanish, except one.*

IONE.

Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan
Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,
And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.
Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?

[1] In the first edition, *truth*, with a small *t*.

[2] In the first edition, *'Till*.

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PANTHEA.

Alas! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

IONE.

What didst thou see?

PANTHEA.

A woful sight: a youth
With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.

IONE.

What next?

PANTHEA.

The heaven around, the earth below
Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
And some appeared the work of human hearts,
For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles:
And other sights too foul to speak and live
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.

FURY.

Behold an emblem: those who do endure
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.

PROMETHEUS.

Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;
Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears!
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,

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So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
O, horrible! Thy name I will not speak,
It hath become a curse. I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
An early-chosen, late-lamented home;
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind;
Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells:
Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh loud?—
Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood
By the red light of their own burning homes.

FURY.

Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans;
Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

PROMETHEUS.

Worse?

FURY.

In each human heart terror survives
The ruin it has gorged: the loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were true:
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
They dare not devise good for man's estate,
And yet they know not that they do not dare.
The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;
And all best things are thus confused to ill.
Many are strong and rich, and would be just,

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But live among their suffering fellow-men
As if none felt: they know not what they do.

PROMETHEUS.

Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd snakes;
And yet I pity those they torture not.

FURY.

Thou pitiest them? I speak no more!

[*Vanishes.*

PROMETHEUS.

Ah woe!
Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!
I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
Thy works within my woe-illumèd mind,
Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.
The grave hides all things beautiful and good:
I am a God and cannot find it there,
Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,
This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul
With new endurance, till the hour arrives
When they shall be no types of things which are.

PANTHEA.

Alas! what sawest thou?

PROMETHEUS.

There are two woes;
To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.
Names are there, Nature's sacred watch-words, they
Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;
The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,
As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!
Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven

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Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:
Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.
This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

THE EARTH.

I felt thy torture, son, with such mixed joy
As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state
I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,
Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,
And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,
Its world-surrounding æther[1]: they behold
Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
The future: may they speak comfort to thee!

PANTHEA.

Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,
Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
Thronging in the blue air!

IONE.

And see! more come,
Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,
That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
And, hark![2] is it the music of the pines?
Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?

PANTHEA.

'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

From unremembered ages we
Gentle guides and guardians be
Of heaven-oppressed mortality;
And we breathe, and sicken not,

[1] In Shelley's edition, *ether*.
[2] In Shelley's edition there is a note of interrogation at *hark*, clearly a misprint for a note of exclamation.

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The atmosphere of human thought:
Be it dim, and dank, and grey,
Like a storm-extinguished day,
Travelled o'er by dying gleams;
Be it bright as all between
Cloudless skies and windless streams,
Silent, liquid, and serene;
As the birds within the wind,
As the fish within the wave,
As the thoughts of man's own mind
Float thro' all above the grave;
We make there[1] our liquid lair,
Voyaging cloudlike and unpent
Thro' the boundless element:
Thence we bear the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee!

IONE.

More yet come, one by one: the air around them
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

FIRST SPIRIT.

On a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn,
Gathering 'round me, onward borne,
There was mingled many a cry—
Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!
Till they faded thro' the sky;
And one sound, above, around,
One sound beneath, around, above,

[1] In Shelley's edition we read *these* for *there*. Mrs. Shelley substituted *there*, with authority, there can be little doubt.

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Was moving; 'twas the soul of love;
'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
Which begins and ends in thee.

SECOND SPIRIT.

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
Which rocked beneath, immovably;[1]
And the triumphant storm did flee,
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between, with many a captive cloud,[2]
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,
Each by lightning riven in half:
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh:
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
And spread beneath a hell of death
O'er the white waters. I alit
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh
Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

THIRD SPIRIT.

I sate beside a sage's bed,
And the lamp was burning red
Near the book where he had fed,
When a Dream with plumes of flame,

[1] In Shelley's edition, *immoveably*.

[2] The only change made here is the insertion of commas after *between* and *cloud*, which seem absolutely necessary to the sense, though they are not in the first edition, or in Mrs. Shelley's. Mr. Rossetti, while punctuating the passage so as to give the same sense as above, says he feels uncertain whether *between*, used for *through* ("through the rainbow's arch"), is not a misprint, and whether we should not read *bestrewn*. I am satisfied that *between* is the right word, first because Shelley uses *between* for *through* in *Alastor*, line 464 (see vol. I, p. 36),

Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair,

and secondly because this identical image is to be found in *The Cloud*,—

The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow;

nor do I see any reason whatever for preferring *bestrewn*. *Between* might even mean between arch and sea.

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To his pillow hovering came,
And I knew it was the same
Which had kindled long ago
Pity, eloquence, and woe;
And the world awhile below
Wore the shade, its lustre made.
It has born me here as fleet
As Desire's lightning feet:
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

FOURTH SPIRIT.

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aërial[1] kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality!
One of these awakened me,
And I sped to succour thee.

IONE.

Behold'st thou, not two shapes from the east and west
Come, as two doves to one beloved nest,
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?
And, hark! their sweet, sad voices! 'tis despair
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

[1] In the first edition, *aerial*.

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PANTHEA.

Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned.

IONE.

Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float
On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,
Orange and azure deepening into gold:
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

FIFTH SPIRIT.

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wildernesses,
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided pinions,
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses:
~~His footsteps paved the world with light~~; but as I past 'twas fading,
And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages bound in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished, unupbraiding,
Gleamed in the night.[1] I wandered o'er, till thou, O King of sadness,
Turned[2] by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected gladness.

[1] I have little doubt that this full-stop should be removed.

[2] Mr. Rossetti substitutes *turn'st* for *turned*, because, as he quaintly observes, "grammar protests against that." It will probably be thought euphony and truth to Shelley both "protest against" *turn'st*.

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SIXTH SPIRIT.

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with killing[1] footstep, and fans with silent wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest bear;
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,
Dream visions of aërial joy, and call the monster, Love,
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now we greet.

CHORUS.

Tho' Ruin now Love's shadow be,
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and wingèd steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,
Man and beast, and foul and fair,
Like a tempest thro' the air;
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb.

PROMETHEUS.

Spirits! how know ye this shall be?

CHORUS.

In the atmosphere we breathe,
As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,
From spring gathering up beneath,

[1] In Shelley's edition, *treads with silent footstep*; but the adjective in the MS. is *killing*. This speech is a reminiscence of a reminiscence. Cf. the *Banquet* of Plato, as translated by Shelley: "For Homer says, that the Goddess Calamity is delicate, and that her feet are tender. 'Her feet are soft,' he says, 'for she treads not upon the ground, but makes her path upon the heads of men.'" (See *Iliad*, Book XIX.)

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Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
And the wandering herdsmen know
That the white-thorn soon will blow:
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
When they struggle to increase,
Are to us as soft winds be
To shepherd boys, the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee.

IONE.

Where are the Spirits fled?

PANTHEA.

Only a sense
Remains of them, like the omnipotence
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,
Which thro' the deep and labyrinthine soul,
Like echoes thro' long caverns, wind and roll.

PROMETHEUS.

How fair these air-born shapes! and yet I feel
Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,
Asia! who, when my being overflowed,
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.
All things are still: alas! how heavily
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;
Tho' I should dream I could even sleep with grief
If slumber were denied not. I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulph of things:
There is no agony, and no solace left;
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

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PANTHEA.

Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her?

PROMETHEUS.

I said all hope was vain but love: thou lovest.

PANTHEA.

Deeply in truth; but the eastern star looks white,
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale
The scene of her sad exile; rugged once
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine;
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
Among the woods and waters, from the æther[1]
Of her transforming presence, which would fade
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

[1] In the first edition, *ether*.

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ACT II.

SCENE I.

MORNING. A LOVELY[1] VALE IN THE INDIAN CAUCASUS. ASIA ALONE.

ASIA.

From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended:
Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,
Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended
Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake, O Spring!
O child of many winds! As suddenly
Thou comest as the memory of a dream,
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet;
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up
As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
The desart[2] of our life.
This is the season, this the day, the hour;
At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,
Too long desired, too long delaying, come!
How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl!
The point of one white star is quivering still

[1] So in the MS. and in the first edition; but *lonely* in Mrs. Shelley's.

[2] In Shelley's edition, *desert*.

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Deep in the orange light of widening morn
Beyond the purple mountains: thro' a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
Reflects it: now it wanes: it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air:
'Tis lost! and thro' yon peaks of cloudlike snow
The roseate sun-light quivers: hear I not
The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn?

PANTHEA ENTERS.

I feel, I see
Those eyes which burn thro' smiles that fade in tears,
Like stars half quenched in mists of silver dew.
Belovèd and most beautiful, who wearest
The shadow of that soul by which I live,
How late thou art! the spherèd sun had climbed
The sea; my heart was sick with hope, before
The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

PANTHEA.

Pardon, great Sister! but my wings were faint
With the delight of a remembered dream,
As are the noon-tide plumes of summer winds
Satiate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep
Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm
Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy
Unhappy love, had made, thro' use and pity,
Both love and woe familiar to my heart
As they had grown to thine: erewhile I slept
Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean
Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,
Our young Ione's soft and milky arms

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Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,
While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within
The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom:
But not as now, since I am made the wind
Which fails beneath the music that I bear
Of thy most wordless converse; since dissolved
Into the sense with which love talks, my rest
Was troubled and yet sweet; my waking hours
Too full of care and pain.

ASIA.

Lift up thine eyes,
And let me read thy dream.

PANTHEA.

As I have said
With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.
The mountain mists, condensing at our voice
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
From the keen ice shielding our linkèd sleep.
Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with intoxication of keen joy:
"Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world
"With loveliness—more fair than aught but her,
"Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me."
I lifted them: the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er
By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,

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Steamed forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere
Which wrapt me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm æther[1] of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle thro' my blood
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorbed,[2] until it past,
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
And tremulous as they, in the deep night
My being was condensed; and as the rays
Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died
Like footsteps of weak melody: thy name
Among the many sounds alone I heard
Of what might be articulate; tho' still
I listened through the night when sound was none.
Ione wakened then, and said to me:
"Canst thou divine what troubles me to night?
"I always knew what I desired before,
"Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.
"But now I cannot tell thee what I seek;
"I know not; something sweet, since it is sweet
"Even to desire; it is thy sport, false sister;
"Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,
"Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept
"And mingled it with thine: for when just now
"We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips
"The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth
"Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,
"Quivered between our intertwining arms."

[1] In Shelley's edition, *ether*.
[2] In the first edition, *absorbed* is in this place exceptionally contracted into *absorb'd*.

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I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,
But fled to thee.

ASIA.

Thou speakest, but thy words
Are as the air: I feel them not: Oh, lift
Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul!

PANTHEA.

I lift them tho' they droop beneath the load
Of that they would express: what canst thou see
But thine own fairest shadow imaged there?

ASIA.

Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven
Contracted to two circles underneath
Their long, fine lashes; dark, far, measureless,
Orb within orb, and line thro' line inwoven.

PANTHEA.

Why lookest thou as if a spirit past?

ASIA.

There is a change: beyond their inmost depth
I see a shade, a shape: 'tis He, arrayed
In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread
Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.[1]
Prometheus, it is thine! depart not yet!
Say not those smiles that we shall meet again
Within that bright pavilion which their beams
Shall build on the waste world? The dream is told.
What shape is that between us? Its rude hair

[1] In the MS. this word is *moon*; but has been misprinted *morn*. in Shelley's and subsequent editions it

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Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard
Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air
For thro' its grey robe gleams the golden dew
Whose stars the noon has quenched[1] not.

DREAM.

Follow! Follow!

PANTHEA.

It is mine other dream.

ASIA.

It disappears.

PANTHEA.

It passes now into my mind. Methought
As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree,
When swift from the white Scythian wilderness
A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost:
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;
But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief,
O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

ASIA.

As you speak, your words
Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep
With shapes. Methought among the lawns together
We wandered, underneath the young grey dawn,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind;
And the white dew on the new bladed grass,
Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently:

[1] In the first edition, *quench'd*.

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And there was more which I remember not:
But on the shadows of the morning clouds,
Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written
FOLLOW, O, FOLLOW! as[1] they vanished by,
And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,
The like was stamped, as with a withering fire,
A wind arose among the pines; it shook
The clinging music from their boughs, and then
Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
Were heard: OH, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME!
And then I said: "Panthea, look on me."
But in the depth of those belovèd eyes
Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

ECHO.

Follow, follow!

PANTHEA.

The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our voices
As they were spirit-tongued.

ASIA.

It is some being
Around[2] the crags. What fine clear sounds! O, list!

ECHOES, UNSEEN.

Echoes we: listen!
We cannot stay:
As dew-stars glisten
Then fade away—
Child of Ocean!

[1] In Shelley's edition, *As*.

[2] Mr. Rossetti suspects that *around* is a misprint for *among* or *amid*,—finding some difficulty in regard to a being "around the crags." My impression is that the word *around* is Shelley's, and that Asia simply means some diffused, elemental being, such as one would expect to find in a poem full of symbolic supernaturalism,—some spirit, perhaps, similar in character to those described by the Earth in lines 658 to 661 (p. 178).

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ASIA.

Hark! Spirits[1] speak. The liquid responses
Of their aërial[2] tongues yet sound.

PANTHEA.

I hear.

ECHOES.

O, follow, follow,
As our voice recedeth
Thro' the caverns hollow,
Where the forest spreadeth;
(MORE DISTANT)
O, follow, follow!
Thro' the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
Where the wild bee never flew,
Thro' the noon-tide darkness deep,
By the odour-breathing sleep
Of faint night flowers, and the waves
At the fountain-lighted caves,
While our music, wild and sweet,
Mocks thy gently falling feet,
Child of Ocean!

ASIA.

Shall we pursue the sound? It grows more faint
And distant.

PANTHEA.

List! the strain floats nearer now.

[1] In Mrs. Shelley's editions of 1839, the sense is changed by the insertion of a comma at *Spirits*.

[2] In the original edition, *aerial*, as in some other instances.

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ECHOES.

In the world unknown
Sleeps a voice unspoken;
By thy step alone
Can its rest be broken;
Child of Ocean!

ASIA.

How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind!

ECHOES.

O, follow, follow!
Thro' the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noon-tide dew;
By the forests, lakes, and fountains
Thro' the many-folded mountains;
To the rents, and gulphs, and chasms,
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and thou
Parted, to commingle now;
Child of Ocean!

ASIA.

Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,
And follow, ere the voices fade away.

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SCENE II.

A FOREST, INTERMINGLED WITH ROCKS AND CAVERNS. ASIA AND PANTHEA PASS INTO IT. TWO YOUNG FAUNS ARE SITTING ON A ROCK, LISTENING.

SEMICHORUS I. OF SPIRITS.

The path thro' which that lovely twain
Have past, by cedar, pine, and yew,
And each dark tree that ever grew,
Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue;
Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,
Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers
Of the green laurel, blown anew;
And bends, and then fades silently,
One frail and fair anemone:
Or when some star of many a one
That climbs and wanders thro' steep night,
Has found the cleft thro' which alone
Beams fall from high those depths upon
Ere it is borne away, away,
By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,
It scatters drops of golden light,
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite:
And the gloom divine is all around;
And underneath is the mossy ground.

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SEMICHORUS II.

There the voluptuous nightingales,
Are awake thro' all the broad noon-day.[1]
When one with bliss or sadness fails,
And thro' the windless ivy-boughs,
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
On its mate's music-panting bosom;
Another from the swinging blossom,
Watching to catch the languid close
Of the last strain, then lifts on high
The wings of the weak melody,
'Till some new strain of feeling bear
The song, and all the woods are mute;
When there is heard thro' the dim air
The rush of wings, and rising there
Like many a lake-surrounded[2] flute,
Sounds overflow the listener's brain
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

SEMICHORUS I.

There those enchanted eddies play
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
By Demogorgon's mighty law,
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
All spirits on that secret way;
As inland boats are driven to Ocean
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw:
And first there comes a gentle sound

[1] In all the editions I have consulted, except Mr. Rossetti's, there is a comma at *noon-day*, instead of a full-stop, clearly a misprint.

[2] In Shelley's edition this much discussed epithet was misprinted *lake-surrounding*. In Mrs. Shelley's editions *lake-surrounded* is substituted; and, as that is the epithet in the MS., I have no doubt Mrs. Shelley's emendation was made from Shelley's list of errata. I can see no difficulty about the expression, which of course has reference to the proverbial sweetness acquired by the sound of the flute in passing across still water. Thus, the singing of the nightingales is compared to the sound of many flutes reaching the ear from the midst of a lake on whose shore the hearer is stationed.

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To those in talk or slumber bound,
And wakes the destined.[1] Soft emotion
Attracts, impels them: those who saw
Say from the breathing earth behind
There steams[2] a plume-uplifting wind
Which drives them on their path, while they
Believe their own swift wings and feet
The sweet desires within obey:
And so they float upon their way,
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
The storm of sound is driven along,
Sucked up and hurrying:[3] as they fleet
Behind, its gathering billows meet
And to the fatal mountain bear
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

FIRST FAUN.

Canst thou imagine where those spirits live
Which make such delicate music in the woods?
We haunt within the least frequented caves
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,
Yet never meet them, tho' we hear them oft:
Where may they hide themselves?

SECOND FAUN.

'Tis hard to tell:

[1] In the MS. there is a full-stop at *destined*, as given above; but in the first edition the line is printed thus:

And wakes the destined soft emotion,

a corruption which I have no doubt Shelley discovered and included in his list of errata; for Mrs. Shelley, with that list in her possession, inserted a colon at *destined* in her first edition of 1839. In her second, a comma was substituted; and Mr. Rossetti reverted to the false reading of the first edition.

[2] The word here is *steams* in the MS., in the first edition, and in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839. In her second *streams* is substituted; but I presume that, if Shelley's list of errata had afforded such a correction of his MS., it would have been made in the *first* edition of 1839.

[3] In Shelley's edition there is no stop at *hurrying*; but in Mrs. Shelley's editions, from the first onward, there is a colon; and I have no doubt this was another emendation from the "formidable list of errata."

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I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float
Under the green and golden atmosphere
Which noon-tide kindles thro' the woven leaves;
And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,
The which they breathed within those lucent domes,
Ascends to flow like meteors thro' the night,
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire
Under the waters of the earth again.

FIRST FAUN.

If such live thus, have others other lives,
Under pink blossoms or within the bells
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
Or on their dying odours, when they die,
Or in[1] the sunlight of the spherèd dew?

SECOND FAUN.

Aye, many more which we may well divine.
But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,
And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
Of fate, and chance, and God, and Chaos old,
And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,[2]
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth

[1] In the MS. the preposition here is *in*: in the first edition, and in those of Mrs. Shelley, it is *on*.

[2] In the first edition we read *dooms*; but Mrs. Shelley substitutes *doom*, doubtless with authority,—although a full-stop at the end of this line has somehow got into her editions, and certainly can be nothing but a misprint,—probably dropped in when the *s* was taken out.

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One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer
Our solitary twilights, and which charm
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

SCENE III.

A Pinnacle of Rock among Mountains. ASIA and PANTHEA.

PANTHEA.

Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm
Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,
Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,
Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
To deep intoxication; and uplift,
Like Mænads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe!
The voice which is contagion to the world.

ASIA.

Fit throne for such a Power! Magnificent!
How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be
The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
Though evil stain its work, and it should be
Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,
I could fall down and worship that and thee.
Even now my heart adoreth: Wonderful!
Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain:
Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
As a lake, paving in the morning sky,
With azure waves which burst in silver light,

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Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on
Under the curdling winds, and islanding
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,
Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumined caves,
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist;
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines,
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,
Awful as silence. Hark! the rushing snow!
The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass,
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

PANTHEA.

Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
In crimson foam, even at our feet! it rises
As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon
Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

ASIA.

The fragments of the cloud are scattered up;
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair;
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes; my brain
Grows dizzy; I see thin shapes within the mist.

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PANTHEA.

A countenance with beckoning smiles: there burns
An azure fire within its golden locks!
Another and another: hark! they speak!

SONG OF SPIRITS.

To the deep, to the deep,
Down, down!
Through the shade of sleep,
Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down!

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down!
As the fawn draws the hound,
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper;
Death, despair; love, sorrow;
Time both; to day, to morrow;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,
Down, down![1]

Through the grey, void abysm,
Down, down!
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern-crags wear not
The radiance of Heaven,

[1] In the first edition there is a full-stop here instead of a note of exclamation. The latter is supplied by Mrs. Shelley.

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Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is one pervading, one alone,
Down, down!

In the depth of the deep
Down, down!
Like veiled lightning asleep,
Like the spark nursed in embers,
The last look Love remembers,
Like a diamond, which shines
On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasured[1] but for thee alone.
Down, down!

We have bound thee, we guide thee;
Down, down!
With the bright form beside thee;
Resist not the weakness,
Such strength is in meekness
That the Eternal, the Immortal,
Must unloose through life's portal
The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne
By that alone.

SCENE IV.

THE CAVE OF DEMOGORGON. ASIA AND PANTHEA.

PANTHEA.

What veilèd form sits on that ebon throne?

[1] In the first edition *treasured* is here contracted into *treasur'd*. These exceptions are rather frequent in the *Prometheus* volume.

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ASIA.

The veil has fallen.

PANTHEA.

I see a mighty darkness
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun,
Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,
Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is
A living Spirit.

DEMOGORGON.

Ask what thou wouldst know.

ASIA.

What canst thou tell?

DEMOGORGON.

All things thou dar'st demand.

ASIA.

Who made the living world?

DEMOGORGON.

God.

ASIA.

Who made all
That it contains? thought, passion, reason, will,
Imagination?

DEMOGORGON.

God: Almighty God.

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ASIA.

Who made that sense which, when[1] the winds of spring
In rarest visitation, or the voice
Of one belovèd heard in youth alone,
Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude
When it returns no more?

DEMOGORGON.

Merciful God.

ASIA.

And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,
Which from the links of the great chain of things,
To every thought within the mind of man
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels
Under the load towards the pit of death;
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate;
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day;
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?

DEMOGORGON.

He reigns.

ASIA.

Utter his name: a world pining in pain

[1] Mr. Rossetti changes *when* to *at*, so as to obtain a grammatical sense, although he admits that the real evil here is, in his opinion, the loss of a whole line. Mr. Swinburne (*Essays and Studies*, p. 197) also refers to the passage as wanting a line after

Of one belovèd heard in youth alone,

but he adds—"It is waste of time to attempt any patching or furbishing of this passage by excision or substitution. Perhaps the author never observed what a gap was left in sense and grammar." I think this latter supposition a probable one; and do not suspect there is a line missing. It is even possible that the word *or* (in *or the voice* &c.) is a corruption of some verb, such as *bear*; but no emendation is safe.

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Asks but his name: curses shall drag him down

DEMOGORGON.

He reigns.

ASIA.

I feel, I know it: who?

DEMOGORGON.

He reigns.

ASIA.

Who reigns? There was the Heaven and Earth at first,
And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose throne
Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves
Before the wind or sun has withered them
And semivital worms; but he refused
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire, and the majesty of love;
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, 'Let man be free,'
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be
Omnipotent but friendless is to reign;
And Jove now reigned; for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease,
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
Fell; and the unseasonable seasons drove
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves:

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And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.
Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings
The shape of Death; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart;
And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey,
Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath
The frown of man; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.
He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe;
And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook, but fell not; and the harmonious mind
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song;
And music lifted up the listening spirit
Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound;
And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,
With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
The human form, till marble grew divine;
And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see
Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.[1]

[1] There is probably no corruption in this passage; but, as it stands, the sense has been so much canvassed that it may be useful to quote the clearest interpretation I have seen of it, that of Mr. Swinburne (*Essays and Studies*, p. 198): he says: "The simplest explanation here possible is, I believe, the right. Women with child gazing on statues (say on the Venus of Melos) bring forth children like them—children whose features

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He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,
And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.
He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wandering stars; and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye
Gazes not on the interlunar sea:
He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,
The tempest-wingèd chariots of the Ocean,
And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed
The warm winds, and the azure æther shone,
And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.
Such, the alleviations of his state,
Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
Withering in destined pain: but who reigns[1] down
Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
Man looks on his creation like a God
And sees that it is glorious, drives him on
The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,
The outcast, the abandoned, the alone?
Not Jove: while yet his frown shook heaven, aye when
His adversary from adamantine chains
Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
Who is his master? Is he too a slave?

DEMOGORGON.

All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil:
Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

reflect the passion of the gaze and perfection of the sculptured beauty; men, seeing, are consumed with love; '*perish*' meaning simply '*deperire*'; compare Virgil's well-worn version, 'Ut vidi, ut perii.' I do not think there is any hint of contrast between transient flesh and immortal marble."

[1] In the first edition we read *reigns*: in Mrs. Shelley's and Mr. Rossetti's editions *rains*; but surely there can be no doubt that the right word is *reigns*; for the statement made is that Jove does *not reign* down evil. If it were that he did not *rain* down evil, it would be contradictory of the whole conception of Jove in this poem.

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ASIA.

Whom called'st thou God?

DEMOGORGON.

I spoke but as ye speak,
For Jove is the supreme of living things.

ASIA.

Who is the master of the slave?

DEMOGORGON.

If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets. But a voice
Is wanting,[1] the deep truth is imageless;
For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
On the revolving world? What to bid speak
Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change? To these
All things are subject but eternal Love.

ASIA.

So much I asked before, and my heart gave
The response thou hast given; and of such truths
Each to itself must be the oracle.
One more demand; and do thou answer me
As mine own soul would answer, did it know
That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world:
When shall the destined hour arrive?

[1] Mr. Rossetti prints this passage thus:

Asia. Who is master of the slave?
Demogorgon. If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets. . . . But a voice
Is wanting, &c.

In noting his omission of the word *the*, he says, "That is so evident a spoiling of the metre that one may well, I think, regard it as a misprint, or mere casual oversight." I cannot say I so regard it.

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DEMOGORGON.

Behold!

ASIA.

The rocks are cloven, and through the purple night
I see cars drawn by rainbow-wingèd steeds
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all
Sweep onward.

DEMOGORGON.

These are the immortal Hours,
Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

ASIA.

A spirit with a dreadful countenance
Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulph.
Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak!

SPIRIT.

I am the shadow of a destiny
More dread than is my aspect: ere yon planet
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

ASIA.

What meanest thou?

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PANTHEA.

That terrible shadow floats
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke
Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.
Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly
Terrified: watch its path among the stars
Blackening the night!

ASIA.

Thus I am answered: strange!

PANTHEA.

See, near the verge, another chariot stays;
An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,
Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope;
How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light
Lures wingèd insects thro' the lampless air.

SPIRIT.

My coursers are fed with the lightning,
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is brightning
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;
They have strength for their swiftness I deem,
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;
I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon;
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle
We encircle the earth and the moon:
We shall rest from long labours at noon:
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

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SCENE V.

THE CAR PAUSES WITHIN A CLOUD ON THE TOP OF A SNOWY MOUNTAIN. ASIA, PANTHEA, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

SPIRIT.

On the brink of the night and the morning
My coursers are wont to respire;
But the Earth has just whispered a warning
That their flight must be swifter than fire:
They shall drink the hot speed of desire!

ASIA.

Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath
Would give them swifter speed.

SPIRIT.

Alas! it could not.

PANTHEA.

Oh Spirit! pause, and tell whence is the light
Which fills the cloud? the sun is yet unrisen.

SPIRIT.

The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo
Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light
Which fills this vapour, as the aërial[1] hue
Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,
Flows from thy mighty sister.

PANTHEA.

Yes, I feel—

[1] In Shelley's edition, *aerial*.

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ASIA.

What is it with thee, sister? Thou art pale.

PANTHEA.

How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee;
I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change
Is working in the elements, which suffer
Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell
That on the day when the clear hyaline
Was cloven at thy uprise, and thou didst stand
Within a veinèd shell, which floated on
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
Among the Ægean[1] isles, and by the shores
Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves
And all that dwells within them; till grief cast
Eclipse upon the soul from which it came:
Such art thou now; nor is it I alone,
Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
Hear'st[2] thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love
Of all articulate beings? Feel'st thou not
The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List!

(*Music.*)

ASIA.

Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his
Whose echoes they are: yet all love is sweet,
Given or returned. Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.

[1] In Shelley's edition, *Egean.*

[2] In Shelley's edition *Hearest*, and *Feelest* in the next line. There can be no doubt that he meant both words to be contracted, as *Feel'st* in Act III, Sc. II, line 49.

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Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
It makes the reptile equal to the God:
They who inspire it most are fortunate,
As I am now; but those who feel it most
Are happier still, after long sufferings,
As I shall soon become.

PANTHEA.

List! Spirits speak.

VOICE IN THE AIR, SINGING.

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them;
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire; then screen them
In those looks,[1] where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light! thy limbs[2] are burning
Thro' the vest which seems to hide them;
As the radiant lines of morning
Thro' the clouds ere they divide them;
And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,
But thy voice sounds low and tender

[1] It has been suggested to read *locks* for *looks;* but Mr. Garnett (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 98) settled the point by recording that "in an Italian prose translation made by Shelley himself the disputed word is rendered *sguardi*." What Shelley meant by the mazes of looks, Mr. Garnett explains by reference to lines 114 to 117, Act II, Sc. I:

Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven,
Contracted to two circles underneath
Their long, fine lashes; dark, far, measureless,
Orb within orb, and line thro' line inwoven.

A still better illustration is to be found in Shelley's letter of the 6th of April, 1819, to Peacock, where he says of the Roman beauties, "The only inferior part are the eyes, which, though good and gentle, want the mazy depth of colour behind colour, with which the intellectual women of England and Germany entangle the heart in soul-inwoven labyrinths."

[2] In Shelley's edition, *lips*: Mrs. Shelley substituted *limbs* in her first edition of 1839, no doubt with authority.

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Like the fairest, for it folds thee
From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever!

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,[1]
And the souls of whom thou lovest
Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

ASIA.

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside a helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses!
Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound:

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions[2]
In music's most serene dominions;
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.
And we sail on, away, afar,
Without a course, without a star,

[1] There is no comma here in the first edition: it was supplied by Mrs. Shelley.

[2] In Shelley's edition these two stanzas are run into one,—clearly a misunderstanding on the part of the printer.

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But, by the instinct of sweet music driven;
Till through Elysian garden islets
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnace glided,
The boat of my desire is guided:
Realms where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds and[1] on the waves doth move,
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have past[2] Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray:
Beyond the glassy gulphs we flee
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day;
A paradise of vaulted bowers,
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,
And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee;
Which walk upon the sea, and chaunt melodiously!

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

[1] In all editions earlier than Mr. Rossetti's, as far as I am aware, this line is printed

Which in the winds on the waves doth move,

and I think the introduction of the word *and*, in which I have followed Mr. Rossetti, is an absolutely certain emendation,—not only for the reason which he gives, that it makes the line decasyllabic like the corresponding lines in the other two stanzas of this uniform lyric speech, but also because the *and* does away with the markedly dactylic opening which, as the line stood, was out of harmony with the stately iambic movement of the whole three stanzas.

[2] In Shelley's edition, *pass'd*, in this instance.

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ACT III.

SCENE I.

HEAVEN. JUPITER ON HIS THRONE; THETIS AND THE OTHER DEITIES ASSEMBLED.

JUPITER.

Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share
The glory and the strength of him ye serve,
Rejoice! henceforth I am omnipotent.
All else had been subdued to me; alone
The soul of man, like unextinguished fire,[1]
Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and doubt,
And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,
Hurling up insurrection, which might make
Our antique empire insecure, though built
On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear;
And tho' my curses thro' the pendulous air,
Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,
And cling to it; tho' under my wrath's might[2]

[1] In Shelley's edition this line is printed thus:

The soul of man, like *an* unextinguished fire,

but in Mrs. Shelley's first edition and onwards the word *an* is dropped. I cannot doubt that this is another correction from Shelley's list of errata.

[2] In Shelley's edition this word is *ht*; but in Mrs. Shelley's and Mr. Rossetti's editions *night* is substituted. It is of course possible that this was one of the changes authorized by the list of errata; but I doubt its being so, and therefore retain *might* in the text. The sense that the soul of man climbs the crags of life subject to the power of Jove's wrath seems to me more probable than the sense that it climbs under the darkness of his wrath.

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It climb the crags of life, step after step,
Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet,
It yet remains supreme o'er misery,
Aspiring, unrepressed, yet soon to fall:
Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,
That fatal child, the terror of the earth,
Who waits but till the destined[1] hour arrive,
Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne
The dreadful might of ever-living limbs
Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,
To redescend, and trample out the spark.

Pour forth heaven's wine, Idæan Ganymede,
And let it fill the Dædal cups like fire,
And from the flower-inwoven soil divine
Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,
As dew from earth under the twilight stars:
Drink! be the nectar circling thro' your veins
The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,
Till exultation burst in one wide voice
Like music from Elysian winds.

And thou
Ascend beside me, veilèd in the light
Of the desire which makes thee one with me,
Thetis, bright image of eternity!
When thou didst cry, "Insufferable might!
"God! Spare me! I sustain not the quick flames,
"The penetrating presence; all my being,
"Like him[2] whom the Numidian seps did thaw
"Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,
"Sinking thro' its foundations:" even then
Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third

[1] In Shelley's edition we read *distant*: in Mrs. Shelley's editions, from the first onward, *destined*, which is unquestionably right.

[2] The soldier Sabellus, in Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Book IX.

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Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,
Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld,
Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,
(Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels
Griding the winds?) from Demogorgon's throne.
Victory! victory! Feel'st[1] thou not, O world,
The earthquake of his chariot thundering up
Olympus?

[*The Car of the* HOUR *arrives.* DEMOGORGON *descends, and moves towards the Throne of* JUPITER.

Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

DEMOGORGON.

Eternity. Demand no direr name.
Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child;
Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together
Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.
The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee:
Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny
Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,
Put forth thy might.

JUPITER.

Detested prodigy!
Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons
I trample thee! thou lingerest?

Mercy! mercy!
No pity, no release, no respite! Oh,
That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge,
Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,

[1] In Mrs. Shelley's editions *Feelest* is substituted for *Feel'st*.

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On Caucasus! he would not doom me thus.
Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not
The monarch of the world? What then[1] art thou?
No refuge! no appeal!

Sink with me then,
We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,
Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock
Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,
And whelm on them into the bottomless void
This desolated world, and thee, and me,
The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck
Of that for which they combated.

Ai! Ai!
The elements obey me not. I sink
Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down.
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
Darkens my fall with victory! Ai, Ai!

SCENE II.

THE MOUTH OF A GREAT RIVER IN THE ISLAND ATLANTIS. OCEAN IS DISCOVERED RECLINING NEAR THE SHORE; APOLLO STANDS BESIDE HIM.

OCEAN.

He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown?

APOLLO.

Aye, when the strife was ended which made dim

[1] In Shelley's edition the word *then* is omitted: it was restored in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839, doubtless from Shelley's list of errata.

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The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven
With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts
Of the victorious darkness, as he fell:
Like the last glare of day's red agony,
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

OCEAN.

He sunk to the abyss? To the dark void?

APOLLO.

An[1] eagle so caught in some bursting cloud
~~On Caucasus~~, his thunder-baffled wings
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded
By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length
Prone, and the aërial[2] ice clings over it.

OCEAN.

Henceforth the fields of Heaven-reflecting sea
Which are my realm, will heave, unstained[3] with blood,
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn
Swayed by the summer air; my streams will flow
Round many-peopled[4] continents, and round
Fortunate isles; and from their glassy thrones
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see

[1] This speech is pointed precisely as in Shelley's edition; but it is open to some doubt whether a line is not lost. We may, however, be meant to understand simply, "an eagle *sinks* so *when* caught in some bursting cloud."

[2] In Shelley's edition, *aerial*.

[3] In the first edition *unstain'd*.

[4] In Shelley's edition and all others which I have consulted, *many peopled continents*, without any hyphen to connect *many* with *peopled*; but, as Miss Blind pointed out in *The Westminster Review* for July 1870, the meaning is wrong without the hyphen.

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The floating bark of the light-laden[1] moon
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea;
Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,
And desolation, and the mingled voice
Of slavery and command; but by the light
Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours,
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,
And sweetest music, such as spirits love.

APOLLO.

And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make
My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse
Darkens the sphere I guide; but list, I hear
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit
That sits i' the morning star.[2]

OCEAN.

Thou must away;
Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell:
The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it
With azure calm out of the emerald urns
Which stand for ever full beside my throne.
Behold the Nereids under the green sea,
Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like stream,
Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair
With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns,
Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.

(*A sound of waves is heard.*)

[1] Here also, the hyphen, which is wanted to bring out the right sense, is absent from Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions.

[2] In Shelley's edition we read

That sits on the morning star.

Mrs. Shelley substitutes

That sits i' the morning star.

Mr. Rossetti follows this reading; and I have no doubt *in* is the right preposition. As to its contracted form—I think we must accept that also as coming from Shelley's list of errata: Mrs. Shelley would scarcely have originated that, one would think; and Shelley *did* use the contraction occasionally when markedly suitable to the rhythm, as here. See line 35, p. 212.

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It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.
Peace, monster; I come now. Farewell.

APOLLO.

Farewell.

SCENE III.

CAUCASUS. PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, THE EARTH, SPIRITS, ASIA, AND PANTHEA, BORNE IN THE CAR WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

HERCULES UNBINDS PROMETHEUS, WHO DESCENDS.

HERCULES.

Most glorious among spirits, thus doth strength
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,
And thee, who art the form they animate,
Minister like a slave.

PROMETHEUS.

Thy gentle words
Are sweeter even than freedom long desired
And long delayed.

Asia, thou light of life,
Shadow of beauty unbeheld: and ye,
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
Sweet to remember, thro' your love and care:
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave,
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veinèd emerald, and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.

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From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light:
And there is heard the ever-moving air,
Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
And bees; and all around are mossy seats,
And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass;
A simple dwelling, which shall be our own;
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
What can hide man from mutability?
And if ye sigh, then I will smile; and thou,
Ione, shalt chaunt fragments of sea-music,
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.
We will entangle buds and flowers and beams
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things,
Like human babes in their brief innocence;
And we will search, with looks and words of love,
For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,
Our unexhausted spirits; and like lutes
Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,
Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
From difference sweet where discord cannot be;
And hither come, sped on the charmèd winds,
Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees
From every flower aërial[1] Enna feeds,
At their known island-homes in Himera,
The echoes of the human world, which tell
Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,
And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,
Itself the echo of the heart, and all
That tempers or improves man's life, now free;

[1] In Shelley's edition, *aerial* again.

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And lovely apparitions, dim at first,
Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright
From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms
Of which these are the phantoms, casts on them
The gathered rays which are reality,
Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt[1] Poesy,
And arts, tho' unimagined, yet to be.
The wandering voices and the shadows these
Of all that man becomes, the mediators
Of that best worship love, by him and us
Given and returned; swift shapes and sounds, which grow
More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
And veil by veil, evil and error fall:
Such virtue has the cave and place around.

(*Turning to the Spirit of the Hour.*)

For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,
Give her that curvèd shell, which Proteus old
Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it
A voice to be accomplished, and which thou
Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

IONE.

Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely
Than all thy sisters, this is[2] the mystic shell;
See the pale azure fading into silver
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light:
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there?

[1] In Shelley's edition *wrapt*: Mrs. Shelley rightly substitutes *rapt*.

[2] The word *is* is in Shelley's edition, but not in any other known to me. Although the line has a redundant syllable, it is not, as printed above, uncharacteristic: and I cannot bring myself to think the word was cut out with authority. I suspect it dropped out accidentally while Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839 was going through the press: this must unquestionably have been the case with the word *is* in the first line of Demogorgon's speech at the close of the fourth act; and the word *is*, occurring after *this*, is peculiarly liable (according to my experience) to be omitted by printers.

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SPIRIT.

It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean:
Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.

PROMETHEUS.

Go, borne over the cities of mankind
On whirlwind-footed coursers: once again
Outspeed the sun around the orbèd world;
And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,
Thou breathe into the many-folded shell,
Loosening its mighty music; it shall be
As thunder mingled with clear echoes: then
Return; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.

And thou, O, Mother Earth!—

THE EARTH.

I hear, I feel;
Thy lips are on me, and thy touch runs down
Even to the adamantine central gloom
Along these marble nerves; 'tis life, 'tis joy,
And thro' my withered, old, and icy frame
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down
Circling. Henceforth the many children fair
Folded in my sustaining arms; all plants,
And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,
And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,
Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,
Draining the poison of despair, shall take
And interchange sweet nutriment; to me
Shall they become like sister-antelopes
By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind,[1]

[1] In Shelley's edition there is no comma after *wind*; but the sense obviously requires one; and it is supplied in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839.

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Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.
The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float
Under the stars like balm: night-folded flowers
Shall suck unwithering[1] hues in their repose:
And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather
Strength for the coming day, and all its joy:
And death shall be the last embrace of her
Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother
Folding her child, says, "Leave me not again."

ASIA.

Oh, mother! wherefore speak the name of death?
Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,
Who die?

THE EARTH.

It would avail not to reply:
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
But to the uncommunicating dead.
Death is the veil which those who live call life:
They sleep, and it is lifted: and meanwhile
In mild variety the seasons mild
With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,
And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,
And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,
Shall clothe the forests and the fields, aye, even
The crag-built desarts of the barren deep,
With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.
And thou! There is a cavern where my spirit
Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain
Made my heart mad, and those who[2] did inhale it

[1] In Shelley's edition *unwitting*; in Mrs. Shelley and Mr. Rossetti's, *unwithering*,—another correction, I presume, from Shelley's list.

[2] The relative employed here in Shelley's edition is *who*. Mrs. Shelley

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Became mad too, and built a temple there,
And spoke, and were oracular, and lured
The erring nations round to mutual war,
And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee;
Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds
A violet's exhalation, and it fills
With a serener light and crimson air
Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around;
It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,
And the dark linkèd ivy tangling wild,
And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms
Which star the winds with points of coloured light,
As they rain thro' them, and bright golden globes
Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven,
And thro' their veinèd leaves and amber stems
The flowers whose purple and translucid bowls
Stand ever mantling with aërial dew,
The drink of spirits: and it circles round,
Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,
Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,
Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.
Arise! Appear!

[*A Spirit rises in the likeness of a winged child.*

This is my torch-bearer;
Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
On eyes from which he kindled it anew
With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,
And guide this company beyond the peak
Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,

substitutes *that*; but it is difficult to imagine that Shelley added so trivial a change to his list; and it seems more likely to be an accidental alteration. The relative *who* is certainly preferable to *that*.

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Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,
And up the green ravine, across the vale,
Beside the windless and crystàlline[1] pool,
Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,
The image of a temple, built above,
Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,
And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,
And populous most with living imagery,
Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.
It is deserted now, but once it bore
Thy name, Prometheus; there the emulous youths
Bore to thy honour thro' the divine gloom
The lamp which was thine emblem; even as those
Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope
Into the grave, across the night of life,
As thou hast borne it most triumphantly
To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.
Beside that temple is the destined cave.

SCENE IV.

A FOREST. IN THE BACKGROUND A CAVE. PROMETHEUS, ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

IONE.

Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides
Under the leaves! how on its head there burns
A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams

[1] In Shelley's edition *crystalline* is not accented, though it was doubtless meant to be sounded with the accent on the second syllable in this case.

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Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,
The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass!
Knowest thou it?

PANTHEA.

It is the delicate spirit
That guides the earth thro' heaven. From afar
The populous constellations call that light
The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes
It floats along the spray of the salt sea,
Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,
Or walks thro' fields or cities while men sleep,
Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,
Or thro' the green waste wilderness, as now,
Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned
It loved our sister Asia, and it came
Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light
Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted
As one bit by a dipsas,[1] and with her
It made its childish confidence, and told her
All it had known or seen, for it saw much,
Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and called her,
For whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I,
Mother, dear mother.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH. (RUNNING TO ASIA.)

Mother, dearest mother;
May I then talk with thee as I was wont?
May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,
After thy looks have made them tired of joy?
May I then play beside thee the long noons,
When work is none in the bright silent air?

ASIA.

I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth

[1] See the grim account of the raging thirst of Aulus, when stung by this serpent, in Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Book IX.

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Can cherish thee unenvied: speak, I pray:
Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

Mother, I am grown wiser, though a child
Cannot be wise like thee, within this day;
And happier too; happier and wiser both.
Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms,
And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs
That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever
An hindrance to my walks o'er the green world:
And that, among the haunts of humankind,
Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,
Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,
Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man;
And women too, ugliest of all things evil,
(Tho' fair, even in a world where thou art fair,
When good and kind, free and sincere like thee,)
When false or frowning made me sick at heart
To pass them, tho' they slept, and I unseen.
Well, my path lately lay thro' a great city
Into the woody hills surrounding it:
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate:
When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all;
A long, long sound, as it would never end:
And all the inhabitants leapt suddenly
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,
Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet
The music pealed along. I hid myself
Within a fountain in the public square,

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Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
Seen in a wave under green leaves; and soon
Those ugly human shapes and visages
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
Past floating thro' the air, and fading still
Into the winds that scattered them; and those
From whom they past seemed mild and lovely forms
After some foul disguise had fallen, and all
Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise
And greetings of delighted wonder, all
Went to their sleep again: and when the dawn
Came, would'st thou think that toads, and snakes, and efts,
Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were,
And that with little change of shape or hue:
All things had put their evil nature off:
I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake
Upon a drooping bough with night-shade twined,
I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,
With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay
Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky;
So with my thoughts full of these happy changes,
We meet again, the happiest change of all.

ASIA.

And never will we part, till thy chaste sister
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon
Will look on thy more warm and equal light
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow
And love thee.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

What; as Asia loves Prometheus?

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ASIA.

Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough.
Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes
To multiply your lovely selves, and fill
With spherèd fires the interlunar air?

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

Nay, mother, while my sister trims her lamp
'Tis hard I should go darkling.

ASIA.

Listen; look!

The SPIRIT OF THE HOUR *enters.*

PROMETHEUS.

We feel what thou hast heard and seen: yet speak.

SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder filled
The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
There was a change: the impalpable thin air
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
As if the sense of love dissolved in them
Had folded itself round the spherèd world.
My vision then grew clear, and I could see
Into the mysteries of the universe:
Dizzy as with delight I floated down,
Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,
My coursers sought their birth-place in the sun,[1]
Where they henceforth will live exempt ~~from toil~~

[1] These three lines are punctuated as in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions, because I take the meaning to be "While I, dizzy with delight, floated down, my coursers sought their birth-place in the sun"; but Mr. Rossetti made a serious innovation by closing the sense with a full-stop at *plumes*.

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Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire.[1]
And where my moonlike car will stand within
A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms
Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,
And you fair nymphs looking the love we feel;
In memory of the tidings it has borne;
Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,
Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,
And open to the bright and liquid sky.
Yoked to it by an amphisbenic snake[2]
The likeness of those wingèd steeds will mock
The flight[3] from which they find repose. Alas,
Whither has wandered now my partial tongue
When all remains untold which ye would hear?
As I have said I floated to the earth:
It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss
To move, to breathe, to be; I wandering went
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,
And first was disappointed not to see
Such mighty change as I had felt within
Expressed in outward things; but soon I looked,
And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked
One with the other even as spirits do,
None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows,
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,
"All hope abandon ye who enter here;"

[1] There is a very strong temptation to insert the word *on* after *pasturing*, which, as the line stands, is used in a transitive sense, as if "to pasture flowers" meant the same as "to eat flowers," instead of meaning the same as "to feed flowers." I have little doubt that Shelley meant the line to be

Pasturing on flowers of vegetable fire,

and that the omission of *on* was never discovered. There is a full-stop at *fire* in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions, which may have been originally a misprint for a comma.

[2] Antique chariot-yokes in the form of a snake with a head at each end are extant; but I am inclined to think Shelley's own fancy adapted to this use the prodigy found with the seps and the dipsas in Book IX of Lucan's *Pharsalia*.

[3] In Shelley's edition we read *light* for *flight*,—an obvious misprint which Mrs. Shelley set right in her first edition of 1839.

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None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear
Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
Until the subject of the tyrant's will
Became, worse fate, the abject of his own,
Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.
None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak;
None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
The sparks of love and hope till there remained
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
And the wretch crept a vampire among men,
Infecting all with his own hideous ill;
None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk
Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes,
Yet question ~~that unmeant~~ hypocrisy
With such a self-mistrust as has no name.
And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
On the wide earth, past; gentle radiant forms,
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
And changed to all which once they dared not be,
Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride,
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgment-seats, and prisons; wherein,
And beside which, by wretched men were borne
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
The ghosts of a no more remembered fame,
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth

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In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
Of those who were their conquerors: mouldering round
Those imaged to the pride of kings and priests,
A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide
As is the world it wasted, and are now
But an astonishment; even so the tools
And emblems of its last captivity,
Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,
Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.[1]

[1] In this much discussed passage (lines 164 to 179) I have not felt it safe or, indeed, necessary to alter the punctuation of the original edition, although there is something to be said in favour of the main change made by Mr. Rossetti,—the removal of the colon at *conquerors*, in favour of a comma, and the insertion of a full-stop at *round*, in line 172. But, at the most, the extent to which I could subscribe to this change would be the simple transfer of the colon to the end of the line: it is likely enough that, in going through the press, the punctuation might have been altered to that extent; but, though the grammatic effect is the same, it is not very likely that a comma and a full-stop became transmuted to a colon.

When Mr. Rossetti first proposed such an emendation in *Notes and Queries*, in 1868, it was contested by Mr. Swinburne, who says (*Essays and Studies*, p. 200) that he can only explain the passage by some such paraphrase as this: "the thrones, altars, and prisons of the past were now like those barbaric and monumental figures carved or engraved on obelisks, which survive the decay of later structures raised by their conquerors, tombs and prisons built by kings of a dynasty more recent than the race which had reared *them;* these they see mouldering round them, built since their date in honour of the religion and the pride of past kings and priests, and are themselves now merely looked on as wonders;" but with deference to so high a critical opinion, I think this makes Shelley's grammar appear more faulty than it really is; and I agree with Mr. Rossetti in taking the word *imaged* in line 173 for the past tense, not, as Mr. Swinburne takes it, for the participle. It seems to me that the sentence, "long-drawn" as it is, is perfectly easy to construe: the Spirit of the Hour tells how, in the changed world, thrones, altars &c. were like the forms engraved on the obelisks, which forms look forth over palaces and tombs of their conquerors (that is to say, the conquerors of those who had the forms engraved). If the colon is to be placed at the end of the line, we have simply to add, to what is predicated of the conquerors' palaces and tombs, that they were mouldering around. If the colon stays where it is, the Spirit of the Hour goes on to say that those monstrous and barbaric shapes, mouldering round, depicted, to the pride of kings and priests, a dark faith and a power as wide as the world it wasted,—that those shapes are now but an astonishment,—and that, in like manner, the tools and emblems of the earth's latest captivity (its latest religion and polity) stand, in the renovated world the Spirit is describing, not overthrown, but of no account.

The consideration that might tempt one to place the colon at the end of the line is that Shelley would perhaps have been more likely to apply the word *mouldering* to the palaces and tombs of the conquerors over which the shapes on the obelisks gazed in triumph, than to the shapes themselves; but as I have no doubt that those very shapes are referred to in the continuation (line 180 *et seq.*) as

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And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,
Which, under many a name and many a form
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execrable,
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love
Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,
And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,
Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines:
The painted veil, by those who were, called life,
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,
All men believed and hoped, is torn aside;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man
Passionless; no, yet free from guilt or pain,[1]

the several transmutations of the idea of God or Jupiter, and as the word *mouldering* is applied to them in line 189, there can be no difficulty about its being applied to them in line 172, —in the same spiritual sense. I take it to mean that their sway over the mind of man is mouldering, or perishing; and, in that case, it does not interfere with the epithet *unworn* in line 170. In any case, the sentence is unimpeachably grammatical, unless, with Mr. Swinburne, we insist on making *imaged* a participle. On this ground, and because the sense is in dispute, I think we can do no better than leave the punctuation alone.

[1] Mr. Rossetti certainly throws light, but also darkness, on this curiously constructed and punctuated passage by giving it thus:—

The man remains,—
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man:
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man.
Passionless? no:—yet free from guilt or pain,—

Mr. Rossetti says that in other edition the statement is that "man remains sceptreless (unsubjected to any sceptre), *but* equal, exempt from degree, and the king over himself; free, *but* exempt from awe; uncircumscribed, *but* unclassed, tribeless, and nationless." And he objects to this *but* on the ground that there is no antithesis, but the contrary, between the epithets which precede and follow it. If the *but* were what Mr. Rossetti takes it to be, this statement is obviously true; but this must not be too hastily admitted. I leave the passage as I find it, because I see no great difficulty, and suspect no corruption whatever, though the forms of expression are certainly eccentric. The *but* in dispute, I take to be used in the common sense of *only, merely,*—the man remains sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, mere man, equal, unclassed, tribeless and

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Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, tho' ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

nationless, exempt from awe, worship, degree, king over himself, just, gentle, wise,—not passionless, yet free from guilt and pain, and not exempt from chance, death, and mutability, though ruling them like slaves. The insertion of a note of interrogation at *passionless* makes the sense more easy to seize at a glance; but I should not think Shelley meant the word to be read with the interrogatory intonation. The insertion of a full-stop at *man* in line 197 seems to me to destroy the one great antithesis that the poet meant to express: I cannot think he meant, as Mr. Rossetti says, that man, though equal, the king over himself, &c., is still man. The antithesis which he seems to me to have meant to emphasize is man equal and thoroughly emancipated from artificial laws and restraints, but not man passionless,—man exempt from guilt and pain, but not from death and mutability.

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ACT IV.

SCENE, A PART OF THE FOREST NEAR THE CAVE OF PROMETHEUS. PANTHEA AND IONE ARE SLEEPING: THEY AWAKEN GRADUALLY DURING THE FIRST SONG.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS.

The pale stars are gone!
For the sun, their swift shepherd,
To their folds them compelling,
In the depths of the dawn,
Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee
Beyond his blue dwelling,
As fawns flee the leopard.
But where are ye?

A TRAIN OF DARK FORMS AND SHADOWS PASSES BY CONFUSEDLY, SINGING.

Here, oh, here:
We bear the bier
Of the Father of many a cancelled year!
Spectres we
Of the dead ~~Hours be~~,
We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew
Hair, not yew!
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!

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Be the faded flowers
Of Death's bare bowers
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours!

Haste, oh, haste!
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.
We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,
With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony!

IONE.

What dark forms were they?

PANTHEA.

The past Hours weak and grey,
With the spoil which their toil
Raked together
From the conquest but One ~~could foil~~.

IONE.

Have they past?

PANTHEA.

They have past;
They outspeeded the blast,
While 'tis said, they are fled:

IONE.

Whither, oh, whither?

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PANTHEA.

To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS.

Bright clouds float in heaven,
Dew-stars gleam on earth,
Waves assemble on ocean,
They are gathered and driven
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee!
They shake with emotion,
They dance in their mirth.
But where are ye?

The pine boughs are singing
Old songs with new gladness,
The billows and fountains
Fresh music are flinging,
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea;
The storms mock the mountains
With the thunder of gladness.[1]
But where are ye?

IONE.

What charioteers are these?

PANTHEA.

Where are their chariots?

SEMICHORUS OF HOURS.

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep

[1] Mr. Rossetti has suggested the substitution of *madness* for *gladness* here, to get a rhyme instead of an echo. The proposed reading has all to recommend it except authority and necessity.

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Which covered our being and darkened our birth
In the deep.

A VOICE.

In the deep?

SEMICHORUS II.

Oh, below the deep.

SEMICHORUS I.

An hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept,
Found the truth—

SEMICHORUS II.

Worse than his visions were!

SEMICHORUS I.

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep;
We have known the voice of Love in dreams,
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap—

SEMICHORUS II.

As the billows leap in the morning beams!

CHORUS.

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with song heaven's silent light,
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,

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And it limped and stumbled with many wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desart year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A VOICE.

Unite!

PANTHEA.

See, where the Spirits of the human mind
Wrapt in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

CHORUS OF HOURS.

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
And your eyes are as love which is veiled not?

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

We come from the mind
Of human kind

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Which was late so dusk, and obscene,[1] and blind,
Now 'tis an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss,
Whose caverns are crystal palaces;
From those skiey towers
Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses;
From the azure isles,
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her syren wiles.

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs
Where Science bedews his Dædal wings.

[1] So in the MS., in the original edition, and in the editions of Mrs. Shelley; but Mr. Rossetti substituted *obscure*, alleging that that word "agrees by similitude with its companion epithets," *dusk* and *blind*, and "by contrast with its opposing epithets," *clear* and *serene*. With *obscene*, he says, "this is not the case: it introduces a novel element—and one which is scarcely congruous with the poetic environments." But I have not the remotest doubt that the word in the MS. was intentionally employed by Shelley,—not in the modern sense hinted at by Mr. Rossetti, but in the sense in which it is applied to the ravens in *Adonais*—

> The obscene ravens clamorous o'er the dead,

which Mr. Rossetti did not alter. It seems to me that *obscure* would so wholly agree with its "companion epithets" as to be hardly more than a repetition of one of them, *dusk*; and I take *obscene* to be in simple and exact opposition to *clear* or *pure emotion*.

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Years after years,
Through blood, and tears,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears;
We waded and flew,
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandalled with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm;
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS AND HOURS.

Then weave the web of the mystic measure;
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth,
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
To an ocean of splendour and harmony!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Our spoil is won,
Our task is done,
We are free to dive, or soar, or run;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round.

We'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize:

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Death, Chaos, and Night,
From the sound of our flight,
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
And the Spirit of Might,
Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight;
And Love, Thought, and Breath,
The powers that quell Death,
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
In the void's loose field
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield;
We will take our plan
From the new world of man,
And our work shall be called the Promethean.

CHORUS OF HOURS.

Break the dance, and scatter the song;
Let some depart, and some remain.

SEMICHORUS I.

We, beyond heaven, are driven along:

SEMICHORUS II.

Us the enchantments of earth retain:

SEMICHORUS I.

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,
With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be.

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SEMICHORUS II.

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,
Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,
With the powers of a world of perfect light.

SEMICHORUS I.

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

SEMICHORUS II.

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,
And the happy forms of its death and birth
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

CHORUS OF HOURS AND SPIRITS.

Break the dance, and scatter the song,
Let some depart, and some remain,
Wherever we fly we lead along
In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong,
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

PANTHEA.

Ha! they are gone!

IONE.

Yet feel you no delight
From the past sweetness?

PANTHEA.

As the bare green hill
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water
To the unpavilioned sky!

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IONE.

Even whilst we speak
New notes arise. What is that awful sound?

PANTHEA.

'Tis the deep music of the rolling world
Kindling within the strings of the waved air,
Æolian modulations.

IONE.

Listen too,
How every pause is filled with under-notes,
Clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones,
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

PANTHEA.

But see where through two openings in the forest
Which hanging branches overcanopy,
And where two runnels of a rivulet,
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,
Have made their path of melody, like sisters
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
Turning their dear disunion to an isle
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts;
Two visions of strange radiance float upon
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet
Under the ground and through the windless air.

IONE.

I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,
In which the mother of the months is borne

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By ebbing night into her western cave,
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams,
O'er which is curved an orblike canopy
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods
Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil,
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
Such as the genii of the thunder-storm[1]
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea
When the sun rushes under it; they roll
And move and grow as with an inward wind;
Within it sits a wingèd infant, white
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,[2]
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds
Of its white robe, woof of ætherial pearl.
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
Scattered in strings;[3] yet its two eyes are heavens
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured
From jaggèd clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,
Tempering the cold and radiant air around,
With fire that is not brightness; in its hand
It sways a quivering moon-beam, from whose point
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow
Over its wheelèd clouds, which as they roll
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

PANTHEA.

And from the other opening in the wood

[1] In Shelley's edition there is a comma here.

[2] Mr. Rossetti's suggestion to amend the strange rhythm of this line, by reading

Its feathers are as plumes of sunny frost,

is certainly worthy of attention.

[3] *String* in Shelley's edition,—*strings* in Mrs. Shelley's. I have no doubt this correction was authorized by the list of errata.

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Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,
Solid as crystal,[1] yet through all its mass
Flow, as through empty space, music and light:
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,
Purple and azure, white, and[2] green, and golden,
Sphere within sphere; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl
Over each other with a thousand motions,
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,
Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on,
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild.
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental ~~subtlety,~~ like light;
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
Seem kneaded into one aërial[3] mass
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,
The ~~Spirit~~ of the Earth is laid asleep,
And you can see its little lips are moving,
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,

[1] In Shelley's edition, *chrystal.*

[2] I have ventured to follow Mr. Rossetti in inserting this second *and*, because it seems morally certain that Shelley did not intend the line to stand as it does in his edition,

Purple and azure, white, green, and golden,

with a syllable too little.

[3] In Shelley's edition, *aerial.*

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Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

IONE.

'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

PANTHEA.

And from a star upon its forehead, shoot,
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined,
Embleming heaven and earth united now,
Vast beams like spokes[1] of some invisible wheel
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,[2]
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart;
Infinite mine of adamant and gold,
Valueless[3] stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline[4] columns poised[5]
With vegetable silver overspread;
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs
Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,
Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on

[1] So in Mrs. Shelley's edition, but *spoke* in Shelley's. In Horne's *Orion* (Book I, Canto I), there is a splendid developement of this thought:

And long before the immortal wheel-spokes cast
Their hazy apparition up the sky...

[2] Mr. Rossetti gives in this line an example of a very slight change producing a very calamitous result: he introduces the letter *e* into *lightning*, thus reducing the line to the normal scansion, but, to my mind ruinously. If, indeed, it is not as Shelley meant it to be,—and the rhythm is perfectly good, though not normal,—it would seem to me much less objectionable to transpose the words thus,

Filling with sun-like lightnings the abyss,

on the possible assumption that Shelley's MS. had been obscurely interlined at this point, and that those who had the printing and revision of the volume had unravelled the line wrongly.

[3] This is a very curious instance of Shelley's use of words compounded with the suffix *less*. Now and then the result is a word which in common parlance means something quite different from what he means; and here he actually uses a word commonly understood to mean *of no value*, when he wishes to convey *of such great value that it cannot be calculated*.

[4] Not accented in Shelley's edition.

[5] In Shelley's edition, *poured*; but *poized* was substituted in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839.

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And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of cancelled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;
Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms, and spears,
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
Of scythèd chariots, and the emblazonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems[1]
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin!
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
Whose population which the earth grew over
Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie,[2]
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes
Huddled in grey annihilation, split,
Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these,
The anatomies of unknown wingèd things,
And fishes which were isles of living scale,
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
Had crushed the iron crags;[3] and over these
The jaggèd alligator, and the might
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
Wrapt deluge round it like a cloke,[4] and they

[1] It may be worth considering whether the word *these* has dropped from the end of this line: the metre is certainly curious as it stands.

[2] There is no comma here in Shelley's edition.

[3] This repetition of the words *iron crags* does not strike me as an oversight, but as a forcible repetition arising from the necessity of the thought expressed, namely that the snakes were either twisted round the rocks or buried in the dust to which they had crushed the rocks. It is difficult to imagine how it could have been expressed as nobly in any other way. Mr. Rossetti regards it as an oversight, probably Shelley's.

[4] So spelt in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions. I have little doubt

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Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God
Whose throne was in a comet, past, and cried,
Be not! And like my words they were no more.

THE EARTH.[1]

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,
The vapourous exultation not to be confined!
Ha! ha! the animation of delight
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

THE MOON.

Brother mine, calm wanderer,
Happy globe of land and air,
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
Which penetrates my frozen frame,
And passes with the warmth of flame,
With love, and odour, and deep melody
Through me, through me!

THE EARTH.

Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.
The oceans, and the desarts, and the abysses,
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptred curse,
Who all our green and azure universe
Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction, sending
A solid cloud to rain hot thunder-stones,

that this orthography was adopted in order to avoid the commonplace associations of the word *cloak*,—a motive suggested in a note on the word *cloke* in *Laon and Cythna*. See Vol. I, p. 130. Mr. Rossetti imports the commonplace associations by changing the orthography in both instances.

[1] See supplementary note, p. 264.

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And splinter and knead down my children's bones,[1]
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blending.

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow, and fire;
My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom
Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire.

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup
Drained by a desart-troop, a little drop for all;
And from beneath, around, within, above,
Filling thy void annihilation, love
Burst in like light on caves cloven by the[2] thunder-ball.

THE MOON.

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine:
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth
My cold bare bosom: Oh! it must be thine
On mine, on mine!

Gazing on thee I feel, I know
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom move:
Music is in the sea and air,
Winged clouds soar here and there,
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of:
'Tis love, all love!

[1] There is no comma at *bones* in Shelley's edition: it was supplied by Mrs. Shelley.

[2] In Shelley's edition *the* had apparently dropped out: Mrs. Shelley supplied it.

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THE EARTH.

It interpenetrates my granite mass,
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass,
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers;
Upon the winds, among the clouds 'tis spread,
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers.

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being:
With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever,
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,
Which could distort to many a shape of error,
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love;
Which over all his kind as the sun's heaven
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even
Darting from starry depths radiance and life,[1] doth move,[2]

Leave Man,[3] even as a leprous child is left,
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is poured;
Then when it wanders home with rosy smile,
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men! a chain of linkèd thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamantine stress;

[1] So in the MS.; but *light* in all editions which I have consulted.

[2] In Shelley's edition there is a full-stop at *move*: Mrs. Shelley substitutes a comma, rightly of course.

[3] In Shelley's edition, *man*, with a small *m*.

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As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine controul,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love;
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be!

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
Is as a tempest-winged ship, whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm,
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass
Of marble and of colour his dreams pass;
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their children wear;
Language is a perpetual orphic song,
Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on!
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none.

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THE MOON.

The shadow of white death has past
From my path in heaven at last,
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep;
And through my newly-woven bowers,
Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep.

THE EARTH.

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half unfrozen[1] dew-globe, green, and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

THE MOON.

Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine;
All suns and constellations shower
On thee a light, a life, a power

[1] In the original edition, *half infrozen*, —in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839, and onward, *half unfrozen*; and I have no doubt this was one of the verbal changes authorized by Shelley's list of errata. Mr. Rossetti reverts to the original edition, on the ground that "the whole simile (applicable to the preceding passage as to the vitalizing of the moon) sets forth how the *warmth* of dawn dissolves a dew-drop into mist. To call this dew-drop, in the first instance, 'half frozen' (or 'infrozen') furthers the simile; but to call it 'half unfrozen' counteracts the simile." This reasoning is very difficult to follow: I should have thought that a half frozen dew-drop was exactly in the same state as a half unfrozen one, and therefore at least as well fitted for comparison to the unfrozen moon; but beyond this it is to be noted that the dissolving warmth of dawn would at first operate on what was wholly frozen, and itself reduce the dew-drop to the state described by *half unfrozen*, before it reduced it to mist. It would not have remained half frozen from night till dawn; and in like manner the moon would have been half unfrozen before it was wholly unfrozen. The simile seems to me perfect in Mrs. Shelley's edition,—imperfect in Shelley's.

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Which doth array thy sphere; thou pourest thine
On mine, on mine!

THE EARTH.

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep;
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep.

THE MOON.

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull;
So when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee
Covered; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
Full, oh, too full!

Thou art speeding round the sun
Brightest world of many a one;
Green and azure sphere which shinest
With a light which is divinest
Among all the lamps of Heaven
To whom life and light is given;
I, thy crystal paramour
Borne beside thee by a power
Like the polar Paradise,
Magnet-like of lovers' eyes;
I, a most enamoured maiden
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move
Gazing, an insatiate bride,

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On thy form from every side
Like a Mænad, round the cup
Which Agave lifted up
In the weird[1] Cadmæan forest.
Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
I must hurry, whirl and follow
Through the heavens wide and hollow,
Sheltered by the warm embrace
Of thy soul from hungry space,
Drinking from thy sense and sight
Beauty, majesty, and might,
As a lover or a[2] cameleon
Grows like what it looks upon,
As a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
As a grey and watery mist
Glows like solid amethyst
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow.[3]

[1] In Shelley's edition, *wierd*.

[2] Mrs. Shelley and Mr. Rossetti omit this word *a*, which is in Shelley's edition. It seems to me very doubtful whether it should be there or not; but perhaps it is safer to leave it.

[3] Mr. Rossetti takes the two opening lines away from the next speech, and adds them to this speech of the moon, closing it thus—

When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow,
And the weak day weeps
That it should be so.

He says it appears to him "*certain* that this couplet ought to belong to the *Moon*," on the ground that it "completes the sense, the metre, and the rhyme, of the Moon's speech, and is at variance with all these properties of the Earth's speech." Mr. Rossetti adds that "assurance is made doubly sure when we turn to the Fragment," given below:

As a violet's gentle eye,
Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds;
As a grey and empty mist
Lies like solid amethyst
Over the western mountain it enfolds,
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow;
As a strain of sweetest sound
Wraps itself the wind around
Until the voiceless wind be music too;
As aught dark, vain, and dull,
Basking in what is beautiful,
Is full of light and love.

"Here," says Mr. Rossetti, "we find that Shelley had at first written, in continuation of the moon's speech, six lines, which he afterwards cut out, substituting this couplet; and one cannot but see in a moment the great probability that the substituted coup-

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THE EARTH.

And the weak day weeps
That it should be so.
Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight
Falls on me like thy clear and tender light

let may have been so jammed in between the Moon's speech and the Earth's as to seem, to the printer's eye, proper, rather to the second than the first." Mr. Swinburne (*Essays and Studies*, pp. 200-1) says "the Earth takes up and gives back the last notes of the Moon's chant before resuming a graver and deeper strain: . . . to me there has always seemed to be a sweet and subtle miracle of music in the text as it stands." So far, I am in accord with Mr. Swinburne; and I quote with regret the following note of recantation: "I must make some partial recantation of the judgment given in my text. Exquisite as would be the echo of the parting song of the Moon given back by the deeper tone of the music of the Earth, I think now that the fantastic beauty of that single repercussive note would perhaps be out of tune with the supreme and equable harmony of the whole; and there seems full reason to attribute this probable misprint to a misreading of the interpolation of these two lines in the manuscript of Shelley." (*Ibid.*, p. 201). I confess I cannot see the ghost of a reason for the change proposed. Looking at the alleged reasons *seriatim*, I do not find any sense left incomplete in the Moon's speech, and therefore do not admit this to be a complement: rather, from the point of view of sense, I should say the two lines in dispute were the comment of the Earth on the Moon's utterance. They do not, certainly, in regard to sense, replace the six cancelled lines; and the reason for the change which commends itself to my mind most strongly is that Shelley found his simile expanding into an undue number of sections: in what is left there are still three similitudes for the Moon's draught of "beauty, majesty, and might"; the six cancelled lines contain two more; and I suspect Shelley thought it best to interrupt the speech before it got unwieldy. The argument of completing the metre and the rhyme must be taken on its merits, with that of the "*single* repercussive note:" the whole fourth act is replete with such notes and such distributions of metre and rhyme: witness the dialogue of Ione and Panthea on the passage of the Hours (lines 30 to 39, p. 239), and the Semichoruses of Hours (lines 57 to 68, p. 241), especially that part in which Semichorus I deliberately breaks off at the words "Found the truth—" leaving Semichorus II to complete metre, rhyme, and sense with "Worse than his visions were!" Then again there is a quatrain divided into three speeches at p. 245 (lines 159 to 162); and in the whole of the ensuing portion from line 519 to line 553, the metre is similarly broken up. But perhaps as convincing an argument as any against interfering with this wonderful note in a wonderful strain of music is to be found in a very simple mechanical consideration. The speech of the Moon in the first edition ends with just half an inch of the page to spare: this half an inch of white is very conspicuous, and the more so because there happens to be a signature (*K* 2) under it, and, the paper being thin, the printing on the back shews through. Now we know that Shelley examined this book carefully when it reached him in Italy,—that he found a great many errors, promised Mr. Ollier a list of errata, and after the lapse of some weeks sent him one, remarking that it was a formidable one. It is almost inconceivable that, having been so long occupied in examining the book for these errata, this most palpable one (if it were one at all) should have escaped: on coming to the page with a blank space at the

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Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,
Through isles for ever calm;
Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
The caverns of my pride's deep universe,
Charming the tiger joy, whose tramplings fierce
Made wounds which need thy balm.

PANTHEA.

I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,
A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,
Out of the stream of sound.

IONE.

Ah me! sweet sister,
The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,
And you pretend to rise out of its wave,
Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew
Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

PANTHEA.

Peace! peace! A mighty Power, which is as darkness,
Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky
Is showered like night, and from within the air
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up
Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,
Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

IONE.

There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

end Shelley must, if anything were wrong, have said or thought "Where are the final lines of the Moon's speech?" But, as Mrs. Shelley carried the corrections of his list into her first edition of 1839, and did not alter this, it seems to follow that no such correction was made by Shelley. Of course it is not to be supposed that he discovered every verbal error in the book; but everything was against the escape of such a glaring error as that would have been, even on a cursory examination of the book.

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PANTHEA.

An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

DEMOGORGON.

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,
Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies:

THE EARTH.

I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

DEMOGORGON.

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee;
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:

THE MOON.

I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee!

DEMOGORGON.

Ye kings of suns and stars, Dæmons and Gods,
Ætherial Dominations, who possess
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness:

A VOICE FROM ABOVE.

Our great Republic hears, we are blest, and bless.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye happy dead, whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colours to pourtray,

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Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffered—

A VOICE FROM BENEATH.

Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone
Of sullen lead; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:

A CONFUSED VOICE.

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

DEMOGORGON.

Spirits, whose homes are flesh: ye beasts and birds,
Ye worms, and fish; ye living leaves and buds;
Lightning and wind; and ye untameable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:

A VOICE.

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

DEMOGORGON.

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave;
A dupe and a deceiver; a decay;
A traveller from the cradle to the grave
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

ALL.

Speak: thy strong words may never pass away.

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DEMOGORGON.

This is[1] the day, which down the void abysm
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dead[2] endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length;
These are the spells by which to re-assume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor faulter,[3] nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

[1] The word *is*, duly printed in Shelley's edition, was dropped out in Mrs. Shelley's, doubtless through accident.

[2] So in Shelley's edition; but *dread* in Mrs. Shelley's and Mr. Rossetti's. I imagine this to have been an error of the press in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839,—taking the sense to be "from the last hour of endurance now dead."

[3] In Shelley's edition we read *flatter*: Mrs. Shelley substituted *faulter*, presumably on the authority of Shelley's own list of errata.

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[The term THE EARTH would seem to have been compelled into double duty in *Prometheus Unbound*; and two of the persons of the drama, speaking under this name, are of clearly opposite sexes. THE EARTH, up to the end of the third act, is of course the Hellenic Gaia; and in the third act this traditional or mythic Earth is clearly distinguished from the more truly Shelleyan conception introduced under the name of THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH. In the fourth act, however, the two choric interlocutors whose utterances are headed as those of THE EARTH and THE MOON are an enamoured brother and sister,—THE EARTH being masculine. Now there can be very little doubt that, through an oversight probably arising from the lapse of time between the writing of the third and fourth acts, Shelley used the terms THE EARTH and THE MOON, to head the divisions of this sublime dialogue, as a kind of mental short-hand for THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH and THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON. The main consideration which has prevented me from so heading the speeches is the existence of an element in those of THE EARTH which might be taken as more appropriate to the veritable Gaia. Not that I think the poet could for a moment have meant to change the sex of Gaia in the fourth act; but it is possible that he may have meant the speaker here to be the literal planet, and not either of the quasi-personal emanations from it who figure in other parts of the poem. But, though possible, I deem this very improbable, for several reasons. In the first place, THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON and THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH are introduced explicitly in the long speeches of IONE and PANTHEA, lines 194 to 318, pp. 247 to 252, immediately preceding the choric dialogue in question. Secondly, this Spirit that guides the Earth is told by ASIA in Act III, Sc. IV, that they will never part till his "chaste sister who guides the frozen and inconstant moon" shall love him; and when he asks—"What; as Asia loves Prometheus?"—the reply is, "Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough": from which, I imagine, we are to assume that in the interval he has grown old enough, and the prophecy of love from THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON is under fulfilment. Thirdly, Mrs. Shelley, in her first edition of 1839, inserted a new *dramatis persona*, THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON, presumably from Shelley's list of errata; and there are no speeches but these of THE MOON to assign to such a person. As regards the possibility that the literal planet may have been meant for the male speaker, it is to be remarked that the talk of hollow mountains, crags, desarts, oceans, abysses, &c., beginning at line 332 (p. 252), is similar to that of Earth the Mother in Act I (beginning at line 152, p. 156), where it is clearly not the planet, but a personal emanation who speaks,—for PROMETHEUS knows that his Mother is "moving near" him. I take it that, whether the emanation were a modification of the mythic Gaia as in the earlier part of the poem, or the spirit that guides the Earth round the sun as in the latter part, Shelley would feel equally justified in letting the speaker use the words "*my* hollow mountains, *my* cloven fire-crags," and so on, and even "*my* children's bones, all *I* bring forth,"—the speaker being supposed to refer to his or her realm, and what exists or is brought forth therein. On the whole, therefore, I have no moral doubt that we should read THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH and THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON for THE EARTH and THE MOON, throughout pp. 252 to 261.—H. B. F.]

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

[Published with *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820.]

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[Adverting to what was said in my preface (Vol. I) on Shelley's selection and arrangement of smaller poems to accompany his greater ones, it will be well to quote here some passages from his letter to Mr. Ollier (*Shelley Memorials*, pp. 138-9) dated the 14th of May 1820, bearing on the particular group of poems to accompany his *Prometheus Unbound*:—"If I had even intended to publish *Julian and Maddalo* with my name, yet I would not print it with *Prometheus*. It would not harmonize. It is an attempt in a different style, in which I am not yet sure of myself—a *sermo pedestris* way of treating human nature, quite opposed to the idealisms of that drama. . . . I ought to say that I send you poems in a few posts, to print at the end of *Prometheus*, better fitted for that purpose than any in your possession." Of the following poems which were those actually published with *Prometheus Unbound*, I am not aware of any complete autograph MSS. being extant. I have some reason to suspect the existence of a transcript of *The Sensitive Plant* in Mrs. Shelley's handwriting, but have not as yet succeeded in reducing this suspicion to a certainty. Of *The Sensitive Plant* and all the others of this wonderful group there are traces in the form of fragmentary drafts in Shelley's note-books now in the possession of his son; but Mr. Garnett, who knows more about these fragments than anyone else does, assures me they yield no important variations from the printed text, though an important blank in Stanza XV of the *Ode to Liberty* is happily supplied.—H. B. F.]

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THE SENSITIVE PLANT.[1]

PART FIRST.

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt every where;[2]
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noon-tide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snow-drop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,

[1] Placed by Mrs. Shelley at the head of the poems written in 1820.

[2] In Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839 this line is printed—

And the Spirit of Love felt every where;

and in her second edition *fell* is substituted for *felt*, so as to make the line read intelligibly. I should imagine that *and* was a misprint in her first edition (a very likely misprint, looking at the number of adjacent lines which begin with *and*), and that, in revising for the second, she noticed the line was wrong and corrected it conjecturally, in the wrong place. In Shelley's own edition the line reads as I have given it in the text; and Mr. Rossetti adopts that reading.

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And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addrest,
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Mænad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
Was prankt under boughs of embowering blossom,

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With golden and green light, slanting through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmered by,
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across,
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
And flowrets which drooping as day drooped too
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it,)

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

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But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver,[1]

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower;
Radiance and odour are not its dower;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the beautiful!

The light winds which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar;

The plumèd insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream;

[1] I leave this stanza precisely as in Shelley's edition; and there ought to be no need for a note on it. The repeated discussion of the sense, however, shews that a note is needed to protect the passage from emendation. I agree with Mr. Swinburne that there is here "a line impossible to reduce to rule, but not obscure in its bearing;" and as the explanation given by that keen critic (*Essays and Studies*, pp. 185-6) is transparently lucid, I can do no better than quote it: "The plant, which could not prove by produce of any blossom the love it felt, received more of the light and odour mutually shed upon each other by its neighbour flowers than did any one among these,

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Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from heaven above,
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
And delight, tho' less bright, was far more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were drowned
In an ocean of dreams without a sound;
Whose waves never mark, tho' they ever impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness;

(Only over head the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant.).

The Sensitive Plant[1] was the earliest
Up-gathered into the bosom of rest;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favourite,
Cradled within the embrace of night.

and thus, though powerless to show it, yet . . . felt more love than the flower which gave it gifts of light and odour could feel, having nothing to give back, as the others had, in return; all the more thankful and loving for the very barrenness and impotence of requital which made the gift a charity instead of an exchange." The use of the words *loved more* as an equivalent for *felt more love*, so as to "include or involve a noun in its cognate verb" is, in the opinion of Mr. Swinburne, "not imitable by others, even if defensible in Shelley." Of course defence or condemnation of any form of speech ascertained to be Shelley's, is an editorial impertinence, to which I do not aspire; and I only expect explanations such as the present to be tolerated on the ground that they are offered (whether original or quoted) as a protection of the text against editorial corruption. Whether the expression "loved more (that is to say loved more *love*) than ever could belong to the giver" be admissible or not, I think it is clearly established that such was Shelley's deliberate phrase; and that is sufficient to condemn any change in it.

[1] In this instance, and in lines 74, 95, and 110, we read, in Shelley's edition, *sensitive plant*, without capitals.

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PART SECOND.

There was a Power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden; a ruling grace
Which to the flowers did they waken or dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind
Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even:
And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth,
Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth!

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
Told, whilst the morn[1] kissed the sleep from her eyes
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise:

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Tho' the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it prest;
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,

[1] In Shelley's edition *moon*, but *morn* in all other editions known to me,—doubtless one of his own corrections.

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That the coming and going[1] of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers thro' all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and ozier bands;
If the flowers had been her own infants she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,

In a basket, of grasses and wild flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

[1] In Mrs. Shelley's editions we read *the coming and the going*; but the second *the*, which is certainly wrong, is not in Shelley's edition.

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But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of summer tide,
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died!

PART THIRD.

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,
Or the waves of Baiæ, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chaunt,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners deep and low;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin plank;

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The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,
Which at first was lovely[1] as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift summer into the autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,[2]
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf after leaf, day after day,[3]
Were massed into the common clay.

[1] In Shelley's edition we read *lively*; but Mrs. Shelley substituted *lovely* in her first edition of 1839,—of course rightly.

[2] In Shelley's edition we read *now*; but *snow* was substituted in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839,—again, presumably, from the list of errata.

[3] So in Shelley's edition, but *day by day* in Mrs. Shelley's editions. Mr. Swinburne (*Essays and Studies*, p. 186) says, with reference to a correspondence in *Notes and Queries*, that this line seems to him "right as it stands—

'Leaf after leaf, day by day'—

if the weight and fall of the sound be properly given. Mr. Rossetti would slip in the word 'and'; were it there, I should rather wish to excise it." Neither critic would appear at that time to have considered what bearing Shelley's own edition had on the matter; but Mr. Rossetti's edition of Shelley, which was subsequent to the correspondence, gives the line according to the original text. Nevertheless I think it is quite open to ques-

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And the leaves, brown, yellow, and grey, and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind past;
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the wingèd seeds,
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set;
And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks,
Were bent and tangled across the walks;
And the leafless net-work of parasite bowers
Massed into ruin; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow,
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.[1]

tion whether Mr. Swinburne's instinct is not correct,—whether this emendation of Mrs. Shelley's was not one for which she had the authority of Shelley's list of errata; and it is certainly worth while to compare the line, as printed by her, with two similar lines in *Rosalind and Helen*:—

> But day by day, week after week
> (l. 311, p. 325, vol. I.)
> And hour by hour, day after day
> (l. 356, p. 327, vol. I.)

It will be noted that the repetition of the same preposition in each half of the line is expressly avoided in both those instances, although there is not in either of them the shortness of a syllable that induced Mr. Rossetti to want to "slip in *and*" in the line of *The Sensitive Plant*.

[1] Mr. Rossetti substituted a semi-colon for a full-stop at the end of this stanza, and a semi-colon for a comma at *henbane* in the next, so as to connect *thistles, nettles, darnels, dock*, and *henbane*, with *began to grow*, and leave *hemlock* to do the work of stifling the air by itself. He says "'*Its*' cannot be allowed to do duty for 'thistles, nettles, darnels,' &c., &c.,—

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And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and mould
Started like mist from the wet ground cold;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated!

Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake,
Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake,
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,
Infecting the winds that wander by.[1]

though possibly the solecism is Shelley's own." But it seems to me that it can and must be allowed, if Shelley meant it so; and I have no doubt that he did mean the two stanzas to stand as they are printed in his edition,—as given above. The construction is not what we would teach at school; but the sense is doubtless that thistles, nettles, darnels, dock, henbane, and hemlock combined to stifle the air, and that hemlock also stretched out its long and hollow shank.

[1] It is very doubtful whether this stanza should remain in the text; but the present evidence against it is hardly sufficient to warrant me in removing it to a station at the foot of the page among *variorum* readings. The evidence is simply its omission by Mrs. Shelley from her first edition of 1839 and all subsequent editions. It may have been dropped out by accident; or it may have been cancelled by Mrs. Shelley on her own authority; or Shelley may, on consideration, have thought it better to omit it, and in that case he would provide for its omission in his list of errata, which would be the authority of his widow for leaving it out. I confess I lean towards this hypothesis; and it may be profitably borne in mind that Shelley must have been well aware of a precisely similar omission from *The Ancient Mariner*, one of his favourite poems. In reprinting that in *Sibylline Leaves* in 1817, Coleridge omitted one very ghastly stanza; and, in a list of errata, gave directions for the cancelling of another; and this process was likely enough to have suggested to Shelley the withdrawal of what, to his keen artistic sense, might well seem to him over horrible when he saw it in print for the first time.

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Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapours arose which have strength to kill:
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noon-day
Unseen; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant like one forbid
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves which together grew
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;
The sap shrank to the root through every pore
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came: the wind was his whip:
One choppy finger was on his lip:
He had torn the cataracts from the hills
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles;

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound;
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne
By the tenfold blasts of the arctic zone.

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Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.
Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost!

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want:
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again,
Then there steamed up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When winter had gone and spring came back
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

Conclusion.

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
Which within its boughs like a spirit sat
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

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Whether that lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scattered love, as stars do light,
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess; but in this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth have never past[1] away:
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change: their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

[1] In Shelley's edition, *pass'd*, instead of the usual *past*.

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A VISION OF THE SEA.[1]

'Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale:
From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
And when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from heaven,
She sees the black trunks of the water-spouts spin,
And bend, as if heaven was ruining[2] in,
Which they seemed to sustain with their terrible mass
As if ocean had sank[3] from beneath them: they pass
To their graves[4] in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
And the waves and the thunders made silent around
Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now tossed
Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
In the skirts of the thunder-cloud: now down the sweep

[1] Assigned to the year 1820 in Mrs. Shelley's Collections.

It is highly curious that in this poem a great number of past tenses &c. are contracted, in the first edition, by the omission of the letter *e*, contrary to Shelley's usual practice. As this must be owing to an accident of some kind, I have restored the *e* in each case: the words in question are *seemed* in line 7, *tossed* in line 11, *hurled* in line 21, *shattered* in line 30, *hungering* in line 33, *seemed* in line 48, *coloured* and *gathered* in line 49, *rained* in line 57, *remained* in line 61, *upgathered* in line 69, *upcurled* in line 108, *scattered* in line 115, and *crushed* in line 140. As to the nature of the accident by which this poem obtained so great a number of instances of this form I can only suggest (1) that it may have been edited in some periodical before its appearance with *Prometheus Unbound*, and have been set up for that volume from a printed copy, or (2) that as Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne seem to have offered to see the book through the press, they may have had some hand in the revision, though there seems to be no doubt that Peacock is mainly responsible for the volume, or (3) that the variation of practice was an undiscovered freak of some odd hand in the printing office. I have not succeeded in tracing the poem in the mazes of contemporary periodical literature.

[2] In the original edition *raining*, an obvious misprint for *ruining*, which was substituted in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839.

[3] In Mrs. Shelley's edition, *sunk*.

[4] Mr. Rossetti gives these lines thus:

as if heaven was ruining in,
Which they seemed to sustain with their terrible mass.
As if ocean had sunk from beneath them,
they pass
To their graves &c.

The reason given for the change of pointing is as follows: "I cannot see the sense of saying 'the waterspouts seemed to sustain heaven, *as if* ocean had sunk from beneath them:' but I do see the sense of saying that the

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Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale
Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
Dim mirrors of ruin hang gleaming about;
While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron
With splendour and terror the black ship environ,
Or like sulphur-flakes hurled from a mine of pale fire
In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
The pyramid-billows with white points of brine
In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea.
The great ship seems splitting! it cracks as a tree,
While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has past.
The intense thunder-balls which are raining from heaven
Have shattered its mast, and it stands black and riven.
The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk
On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,
Like a corpse on the clay which is hungering to fold
Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
One deck is burst up from the waters below,
And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow
O'er the lakes of the desart! Who sit on the other?
Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those
Twin tigers,[1] who burst, when the waters arose,

waterspouts collapse *as if* ocean had sunk from beneath them." I can see no difficulty about the sense of the passage as given in Shelley's edition, namely that the eye was so occupied by the stupendous mass of the waterspouts as to receive the impression that they instead of ocean itself were the base on which the arch of heaven rested.

[1] Another peculiarity of this poem is that the word *tiger* is spelt, throughout, *tyger*, though this orthography does not occur elsewhere in the *Prometheus* volume. I have given Shelley's usual orthography wherever the word occurs (namely in lines 72, 92, 137, 143, and 156), because I do not think there is sufficient evidence that the unusual spelling was his deliberate choice, or even his at all.

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In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold;
(What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold;)
Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank.
Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain
On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
And there seemed to be fire in the beams of the moon,
Till a lead-coloured fog gathered up from the deep
Whose breath was quick pestilence; then, the cold sleep
Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,
O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast
Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast
Down the deep, which closed on them above and around,
And the sharks and the dog-fish their grave-clothes unbound,
And were glutted like Jews with this manna rained down
From God on their wilderness. One after one
The mariners died; on the eve of this day,
When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array,
But seven remained. Six the thunder has[1] smitten,
And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written
His scorn of the embalmer; the seventh, from the deck
An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back,
And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck.
No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair
Than heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
She clasps a bright child on her upgathered knee,
It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder
Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder
It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near,
It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear

[1] So in Shelley's edition; but *had* in Mrs. Shelley's from 1839 onwards.

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Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high,
The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye;
Whilst its mother's is lustreless. "Smile not, my child,
"But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
"Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,
"So dreadful since thou must divide it with me!
"Dream, sleep! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed,
"Will it rock thee not, infant? 'Tis beating with dread!
"Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we,
"That when the ship sinks we no longer may be?
"What! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more?
"To be after life what we have been before?
"Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those eyes,[1]
"Those lips, and that hair, all that smiling disguise
"Thou yet wearest, sweet spirit, which I, day by day,
"Have so long called my child, but which now fades away
"Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower?" Lo! the ship
Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip;
The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine
Crawling inch by inch on them, hair, ears, limbs, and eyne,
Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse cry
Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously,
And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,
Hurried on by the might of the hurricane:
The hurricane came from the west, and past on
By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
Transversely dividing the stream of the storm;
As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.
Black as a cormorant the screaming blast,

[1] There is a full stop at *eyes* in Shelley's edition: Mrs. Shelley rightly substituted a comma in her first edition of 1839.

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Between ocean and heaven, like an ocean, past,
Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
Which, based on the sea and to heaven upcurled,
Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain,
As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag:
And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has past,
Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast;
They are scattered like foam on the torrent; and where
The wind has burst out from the chasm, from the air
Of clear morning, the beams of the sunrise flow in,
Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate
They encounter, but interpenetrate.
And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
And the caverns of cloud[1] are torn up by the day,
And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings
Lulled by the motion and murmurings,
And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea,
And over head glorious, but dreadful to see
The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
The deep calm of blue heaven dilating above,
And, like passions made still by the presence of Love,
Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide
Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide
From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with heaven's azure smile,[2]
The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where
Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay

[1] In Shelley's edition *clouds*;—in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839, *cloud*, and so in all other editions known to me.

[2] In Shelley's edition there is a full-stop at *smile*, removed in favour of a comma in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839.

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One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
Stain the clear air with sunbows; the jar, and the rattle
Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness;
And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins,
Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and the splash
As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash
The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the screams
And hissings crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean streams,
Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
The fin-wingèd tomb of the victor. The other
Is winning his way from the fate of his brother,
To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat
Advances; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
Urge on the keen keel, the brine foams. At the stern
Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn
In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on
To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,
'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,
Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.
With her left hand she grasps it impetuously,
With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere;
Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
Like a meteor of light o'er the waters! her child
Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring; so smiled
The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
Whilst———

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ODE TO HEAVEN.[1]

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

FIRST SPIRIT.

PALACE-ROOF of cloudless nights!
Paradise of golden lights!
  Deep, immeasurable, vast,
Which art now, and which wert then!
  Of the present and the past,
Of the eternal where and when,
  Presence-chamber, temple, home,
  Ever-canopying dome,
  Of acts and ages yet to come!

Glorious shapes have life in thee,
Earth, and all earth's company;
  Living globes which ever throng
Thy deep chasms and wildernesses;
  And green worlds that glide along;
And swift stars with flashing tresses;
  And icy moons most cold and bright,
  And mighty suns beyond the night,
  Atoms of intensest light.

[1] Mrs. Shelley groups this ode with poems written in 1819.

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Even thy name is as a god,
Heaven! for thou art the abode
  Of that power which is the glass
Wherein man his nature sees.
  Generations as they pass
Worship thee with bended knees.
  Their unremaining gods and they
  Like a river roll away:
  Thou remainest such alway.

SECOND SPIRIT.

Thou art but the mind's first chamber,
Round which its young fancies clamber,
  Like weak insects in a cave,
Lighted up by stalactites;
  But the portal of the grave,
Where a world of new delights
  Will make thy best glories seem
  But a dim and noonday gleam
  From the shadow of a dream!

THIRD SPIRIT.

Peace! the abyss is wreathed with scorn
At your presumption, atom-born!
  What is heaven? and what are ye
Who its brief expanse inherit?
  What are suns and spheres which flee
With the instinct of that spirit
  Of which ye are but a part?
  Drops which Nature's mighty heart
  Drives through thinnest veins. Depart!

What is heaven? a globe of dew,
Filling in the morning new

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Some eyed flower whose young leaves waken
On an unimagined world:
Constellated suns unshaken,
Orbits measureless, are furled
In that frail and fading sphere,
With ten millions gathered there,
To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

AN EXHORTATION.[1]

Camelions feed on light and air:
Poets' food is love and fame:
If in this wide world of care
Poets could but find the same
With as little toil as they,
Would they ever change their hue
As the light camelions do,
Suiting it to every ray
Twenty times a-day?

Poets are on this cold earth,
As camelions might be,
Hidden from their early birth
In a cave beneath the sea;
Where light is camelions change:
Where love is not, poets do:
Fame is love disguised: if few
Find either never think it strange
That poets range.

[1] These stanzas are assigned by Mrs. Shelley to 1819. Mr. Rossetti presumes, very reasonably, that this is the poem sent by Shelley to Mrs. Gisborne on the 8th of May 1820, with the remark, "As an excuse for mine and Mary's incurable stupidity, I send a little thing about poets, which is itself a kind of excuse for Wordsworth."

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Yet dare not stain with wealth or power
A poet's free and heavenly mind:
If bright camelions should devour
Any food but beams and wind,
They would grow as earthly soon
As their brother lizards are.
Children of a sunnier star,
Spirits from beyond the moon,
O, refuse the boon!

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.[1]

I.

O, WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O, thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

[1] This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza [beginning at the top of p. 292] is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathises with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Mrs. Shelley gives this poem as written in the year 1819.

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Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art[1] moving every where;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O, hear!

II.

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome[2] of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: O, hear!

[1] So in Shelley's edition and all others known to me except Mrs. Shelley's first of 1839, in which *are* is printed for *art*.

[2] Mr. Garnett (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 93) gives *dome* as a correction in this line derived from the MS.; but *dome* is the word in Shelley's printed edition, and also in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839,—the word *doom*, corrected by Mr. Garnett, being a corruption which originated in the second edition of 1839,—probably a mere printer's error, as there is nothing in the word that could possibly have commended it to Mrs. Shelley or any other intelligent editor as an emendation.

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III.

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystàlline[1] streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O, hear!

IV.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O, uncontroulable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy[2] skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

[1] There is no accent on the second syllable in Shelley's edition.

[2] So in Shelley's edition, and Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839: it was in her second that the notorious corruption of the later copies, *the* for *thy*, first made its appearance. No doubt it was a mere misprint. There is MS. authority for *thy* if such were needed: see Mr. Garnett's *Relics of Shelley*, p. 93.

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As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

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AN ODE,

[WRITTEN, OCTOBER, 1819, BEFORE THE SPANIARDS HAD RECOVERED THEIR LIBERTY.][1]

ARISE, arise, arise!
There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread;
Be your wounds like eyes
To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.
What other grief were it just to pay?
Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they;
Who said they were slain on the battle day?

Awaken, awaken, awaken
The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes;
Be the cold chains shaken
To the dust where your kindred repose, repose:
Their bones in the grave will start and move,
When they hear the voices of those they love,
Most loud in the holy combat above.

Wave, wave high the banner!
When Freedom[2] is riding to conquest by:
Though the slaves that fan her
Be Famine and Toil, giving sigh for sigh.
And ye who attend her imperial car,
Lift not your hands in the banded war,
But in her defence whose children ye are.

[1] In the original edition this poem is headed as above: in Mrs. Shelley's editions it is called "An Ode to the Assertors of Liberty," which title Mr. Rossetti adopts. For a cancelled stanza, see Addenda to Vol. IV, p. 571.

[2] In Shelley's edition *freedom* here, and *famine* and *toil* in line 18, are not given with capitals, though clearly used personally.

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Glory, glory, glory,
To those who have greatly suffered and done!
Never name in story
Was greater than that which ye shall have won.
Conquerors have conquered their foes alone,
Whose revenge, pride, and power they have overthrown:
Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.

Bind, bind every brow
With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine:
Hide the blood-stains now
With hues which sweet nature has made divine:
Green strength, azure hope, and eternity:
But let not the pansy among them be;
Ye were injured, and that means memory.

THE CLOUD.[1]

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;

[1] Mrs. Shelley, in grouping the poems for her collected editions, assigns *The Cloud* to 1820; but Mr. Rossetti, taking literally a passage in Mrs. Shelley's Preface, inclines to group the poem with those of 1818 at latest, though he leaves it standing among those of 1820. The passage in Mrs. Shelley's Preface is this: "There are others, such as the 'Ode to the Sky Lark,' and 'The Cloud,' which in the opinion of many critics, bear a purer poetical stamp than any other of his productions. They were written as his mind prompted, listening to the carolling of the bird, aloft in the azure sky of Italy; or marking the cloud as it sped across the heavens, while he floated in his boat on the Thames." Mr. Rossetti says, "I rather suspect this latter is the surer guide as to the date, and the style of the poem would suggest a like induction. However, it is possible that Shelley *completed* the lyric in 1820." Now it seems to me that Mrs. Shelley merely means to refer to a class of poems and a class of influences, and selects those two as types without considering their bearing on chronology; and she certainly does not say that the particular poem called *The Cloud* was written during the time of residence near the Thames. The internal evidence also commends the poem to me as belonging to Italy: it is more like *Arethusa*, both in metre and in style, than anything else of

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I bear light shade[1] for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds[2] every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits,
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

Shelley's; and *Arethusa* is distinctly dated "Pisa, 1820."

[1] So in Shelley's edition, but *shades* in Mrs. Shelley's two editions of 1839.

[2] In Shelley's edition, *birds*; in Mrs. Shelley's *buds*,—an emendation adopted by Mr. Rossetti, and which we ought probably to accept as one of those given in Shelley's list of errata.

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The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,[1]
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,[2]
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;

[1] In Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions, there is a full stop at *dead*, an obvious misprint.

[2] In the original edition *swins* instead of *swings*.

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The volcanos are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

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TO A SKYLARK.[1]

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher,
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;[2]
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

[1] This poem is assigned by Mrs. Shelley to the year 1820; and I have not heard of any suspicion of an earlier genesis.

[2] I leave the punctuation of this stanza as in the first edition: Mrs. Shelley's only change was the addition of a comma at the end of the first line,—not an improvement, though not very harmful; but owing to a fallacious and shallow argument of the late Professor Craik's, this stanza and the next have both been corrupted in Mr. Rossetti's edition. The preservation of these lovely verses in their integrity is so important that, rather than risk any argument of my own, I will quote the excellent defence of Shelley's text made by Professor Thomas S. Baynes in *The Edinburgh Review* for April 1871. The passage which Professor Baynes transcribes from Professor Craik's *English Literature and Language* is as follows:—"Very absurdly the cloud of fire which the bird has become in the poet's imagination is, by the removal of the semicolon from its proper place at the end of the second line to the end of the third, represented, not as soaring in the deep blue of the sky, but as springing from the earth—which is what nobody ever saw a cloud do; not a cloud of fire, or cloud glowing with coloured radiance at any rate; and would, besides, give us as forced and false an image of a lark commencing its ascent as could be well put into rhyme or into words—for the cloud of fire was only, according to this pointless pointing, the appearance which the bird presented (and which yet it never could have presented) when rising from the earth." The refutation, which is complete, runs thus, "The whole of this reasoning, and there is more to the same effect, rests on the assumption that in the second verse the lark is described as leaving the ground. This is, however, a complete mistake, the critic having failed to notice that in the opening verse of the poem the lark, when first addressed by the poet, is already far up the sky; and that in the second verse she continues to ascend further and further from the earth, higher and higher into the air. The image, 'like a cloud of fire,' applies not to the appearance of the bird

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In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied[1] joy whose race is just begun. 15

at all, as Professor Craik supposes, but to the continuous motion upward, for the obvious reason that 'fire ascending seeks the sun.' The assumption on which it rests being thus an error, the whole reasoning falls to the ground, and with it any show of plausibility for the change. Indeed, the altered punctuation of the verse, and its interpretation, simply blur the pure and delicate outlines of the poet's glowing picture, reducing his lucid thought and vivid imagery to a confused and inconsistent jumble."

[1] This word is *unbodied* in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions; but Mr. Rossetti, following Professor Craik, altered it to *embodied*; and even Mr. Garnett (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 97) says: "There can be no hesitation in admitting Professor Craik's most felicitous emendation, *embodied* for *unbodied*, nor in expunging the semicolon from the preceding stanza." As regards the semi-colon, see the preceding note: as regards this substitution of *embodied* for *unbodied*, I will again quote Professor Baynes's excellent article in *The Edinburgh Review*, —merely premising that I entirely concur with him here, and that Mr. Swinburne also, both as regards this change and that in the preceding stanza, stands by the original text. See *Essays and Studies*, p. 229. Professor Baynes says: "In quoting the poem Professor Craik changed *unbodied* into *embodied*, adding that the latter was 'undoubtedly the true word, though always perverted into *unbodied*,—as if a joy were a thing that naturally wore a body.' This is just the smart but superficial kind of criticism that readily convinces prosaic minds, and is at once accepted by careless and unimaginative readers. To our great surprise, however, it seems to have satisfied Mr. Rossetti. At least, as in other cases where he has adopted the suggestions of previous critics, he has become accountable for the change by introducing it into the text. That any responsible editor should have given this kind of sanction to such a reading is on all accounts to be regretted. In the first place, Shelley's text ought never to be abandoned except on very strong grounds; and the reasons in this case, instead of being in favour of the change, are all against it. Professor Craik says, in support of his conjecture, 'as if joy were a thing that naturally wore a body.' But in reality joy usually has a body, and a very visible one. It manifests itself by corporeal signs and gestures of a very obvious and distinctive kind, and is universally known and recognized by these signs. Almost the only exception to this law of visible embodiment is that of sweet and thrilling vital sounds when the source whence they flow is unseen. In this case, while the sounds are felt to be full of rapture, or at least of conscious enjoyment, still the enjoyment is not embodied in any visible or tangible shape. This spiritual character of the skylark's singing is the very key-note of Shelley's poem, struck in the first stanza, and maintained through all its marvellous combinations of musical thought, and imagery, and emotion, to the very close. The fatal objection to the proposed change is, that it is completely at variance with the whole feeling, as well as with the entire conception of the poem, that it reverses the very epithet by which in this particular stanza that conception is most vividly expressed. At the outset, Shelley addresses the skylark as a spirit singing in the pure empyrean, and ever soaring nearer to heaven's gate as she sings. He then apostrophizes the emancipated soul of

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The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

melody on the celestial lightness and freedom in which it now expatiates. To the swift sympathetic imagination of the poet, the scorner of the ground, floating far up in the golden light, had becomé an aërial rapture, a disembodied joy, a 'delighted spirit,' whose ethereal race had just begun. This is a representation at once profoundly poetical and profoundly true. But its force and consistency is destroyed by the so-called emendation."

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Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial[1] hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard[2]
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

[1] In Shelley's edition, *aerial* in this instance, as in some others.

[2] In Shelley's edition there is an apparently accidental comma after *heard*.

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Chorus Hymenæal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor[1] cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew[2] love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

[1] In Shelley's edition, *Langour*.

[2] Mr. Rossetti points out that there is a "grammatical laxity" here, but admits that "the sound of this lovely line would be so spoiled by changing the word into 'knew'st' that no rectification of grammar is permissible." Every lover of Shelley must heartily concur in this opinion; but one naturally wonders what reason against altering this verse was not equally cogent against change in a precisely similar case in *Epipsychidion*, where Mr. Rossetti substitutes *drew'st* for *drew* in the exquisite passage

Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,
Who drew the heart of this frail Universe
Towards thine own.

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Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

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ODE TO LIBERTY.[1]

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner torn but flying,
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.

BYRON.

I.

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations: Liberty
From heart to heart,[2] from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,
And, in the rapid plumes of song,
Clothed itself, sublime and strong;
As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,
Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey;
Till from its station in the heaven of fame

[1] This poem is assigned by Mrs. Shelley to the year 1820, to which year the events commemorated in the first stanza likewise point.

[2] In Shelley's edition the opening lines are printed as in the text. My brother, Alfred Forman, suggests as an emendation—

A glorious people vibrated again:
The lightning of the nations, Liberty,
From heart to heart, &c.

I confess that to me it seems absolutely certain that the text does not give Shelley's punctuation: to say that a people vibrated the lightning of the nations is extremely curious, and to talk of liberty as *gleaming* from tower to tower and scattering contagious fire into the sky, unless in direct apposition to lightning, is a strained use of language. On the other hand the simple statement that a people vibrated, and that Liberty, the lightning of nations, gleamed, is at once perfectly simple and extremely grand. The rhythm is also more characteristic. I have little doubt that an error occurred by the misunderstanding of a correction on the proof-sheet: probably the colon had to be supplied in the margin, and the printer dropped it in in the wrong place. Nevertheless, I am bound to record that Mr. Rossetti, and, I am told, Mr. Swinburne, hold by the original reading.

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The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
A voice out of the deep: I will record the same.

II.

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth:
The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
Into the depths of heaven. The dædal earth,
That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air:
But this divinest universe
Was yet a chaos and a curse,
For thou wert not: but power from worst producing worse,
The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
And of the birds, and of the watery forms,
And there was war among them, and despair
Within them, raging without truce or terms:
The bosom of their violated nurse
Groaned, for beasts warred[1] on beasts, and worms on worms,
And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms.

III.

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
His generations under the pavilion
Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,
Temple and prison, to many a swarming million,
Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves.
This human living multitude
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,

[1] In Shelley's edition, *groaned* and *warred* are in this instance contracted by the omission of *e*, in exception to his usual practice.

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Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves
Hung Tyranny[1]; beneath, sate deified
The sister-pest, congregator of slaves;[2]
Into the shadow of her pinions wide
Anarchs and priests who feed on gold and blood,
Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

IV.

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves
Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
Of favouring heaven: from their enchanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.
On the unapprehensive wild
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein
Of Parian stone; and yet a speechless child,
Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain
Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Ægean main

V.

Athens arose: a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors
Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;

[1] In Shelley's edition, *tyranny*, with a small *t*.

[2] In Shelley's edition there is no stop here, but a semi-colon at the end of the next line: in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839, and onwards, the semi-colon appears as above. As the sense seems to me very much improved by this change, I assume that it was one of those indicated in Shelley's list of errata.

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Its portals are inhabited
By thunder-zonèd winds, each head
Within its cloudy wings with sunfire garlanded,
A divine work! Athens diviner yet
Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will
Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;
For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill
Peopled with forms that mock the eternal dead
In marble immortality, that hill
Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

VI.

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
Immovably[1] unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
With an earth-awakening blast
Through the caverns of the past;
Religion[2] veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:
A wingèd sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
Which soars where Expectation never flew,
Rending the veil of space and time asunder!
One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;
One sun illumines heaven; one spirit vast
With life and love makes chaos ever new,
As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

VII.

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmæan Mænad,*

* See the Bacchæ of Euripides. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

[1] In Shelley's edition, *immoveably*, as at p. 180. Compare this passage with Stanza iii of *Evening, Ponte a Mare*, Vol. IV, p. 111.

[2] *Oppression* and *Religion* in this stanza are, it need hardly be pointed

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She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
From that Elysian food was yet unweanèd;
And many a deed of terrible uprightness
By thy sweet love was sanctified;
And in thy smile, and by thy side,
Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,
And gold profaned[1] thy capitolian throne,
Thou didst desert, with spirit-wingèd lightness,
The senate of the tyrants: they sunk prone
Slaves of one tyrant: Palatinus sighed
Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone
Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

VIII.

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
Or utmost islet inaccessible,
Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
Teaching the woods and waves, and desart rocks,
And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
To talk in echoes sad and stern,
Of that sublimest lore[2] which man had dared unlearn?
For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.
What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks
Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep,
When from its sea of death to kill and burn,
The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

out, intended to represent the same figurative entities as those given under the terms *Tyranny* and *the sister-pest, congregator of slaves*, in stanza III.

[1] In Shelley's edition, *prophaned*.

[2] In Shelley's edition we read *love*: *lore* was substituted in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839, rightly, of course.

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IX.

A thousand years the Earth cried, Where art thou?
And then the shadow of thy coming fell
On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow:
And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
Arose in sacred Italy,
Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned majesty;
That multitudinous anarchy did sweep,
And burst around their walls, like idle foam,
Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep
Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,
With divine wand[1] traced on our earthly home
Fit imagery to pave heaven's everlasting dome.

X.

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror
Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,
Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-wingèd Error,
As light may pierce the clouds when they dissever
In the calm regions of the orient day!
Luther caught thy wakening glance,
Like lightning, from his leaden lance
Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;
And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen,
In songs whose music cannot pass away,
Though it must flow for ever: not unseen
Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

[1] So in Shelley's edition, but *want* in Mrs. Shelley's two editions of 1839: this change was doubtless a printer's error.

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XI.

The eager hours and unreluctant years
As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood,
Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
Darkening each other with their multitude,
And cried aloud, Liberty! Indignation
Answered Pity from her cave;
Death grew pale within the grave,
And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save!
When like heaven's sun girt by the exhalation
Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,
Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

XII.

Thou heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee then,
In ominous eclipse? a thousand years
Bred from the slime of deep oppression's den,
Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away;
How like Bacchanals of blood
Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood!
When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers
Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,
Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers
Of serene heaven. He, by the past pursued,
Rests with those dead, but unforgotten hours,
Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral towers.

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XIII.

England yet sleeps: was she not called of old?
Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
Vesuvius wakens Ætna, and the cold
Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in sunder:
O'er the lit waves every Æolian isle
From Pithecusa to Pelorus
Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus:
They cry, Be dim; ye lamps of heaven suspended o'er us.
Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
And they dissolve; but Spain's were links of steel,
Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.
Twins of a single destiny! appeal
To the eternal years enthroned before us,
In the dim West; impress us[1] from a seal,
All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal.

XIV.

Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead,
Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
His soul may stream over the tyrant's head;
Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
King-deluded Germany,
His dead spirit lives in thee.

[1] I think we ought probably to read *as* for *us* here; but I am by no means sure that the passage does not stand as Shelley meant it to be, notwithstanding Mr. Swinburne's verdict that "the construction runs wild and falls to pieces." It seems to me that neither he nor Mr. Rossetti gives the right meaning of the passage. Mr. Swinburne says (*Essays and Studies*, p. 189), "The sense at starting is clearly—'Impress us *with* all ye have thought or done, which time cannot dare conceal'; or, 'Let all ye have thought and done impress us,' and so forth." Mr. Rossetti construes it thus:—"Do thou impress us living Spaniards and Englishmen, as if from a seal, O thou all that Spain and England have thought and done worthily in time past! Time cannot dare to conceal that." To me the poet seems to invoke England and Spain to rise together and appeal to the future of Republican America, to impress on them, as from a seal, all that had been and should be thought and done by Republicanism in America; and that invocation is supported by the simple proposition that Time cannot dare conceal *anything*.

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Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!
And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness!
Thou island of eternity! thou shrine
Where desolation clothed with loveliness,
Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces.

XV.

O, that the free would stamp the impious name
Of KING[1] into the dust! or write it there,
So that this blot upon the page of fame
Were as a serpent's path, which the light air
Erases, and the flat sands close behind!
Ye the oracle have heard:
Lift the victory-flashing sword,
And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,
Which weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
Into a mass, irrefragably firm,
The axes and the rods which awe mankind;
The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm
Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred;
Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
To set thine armèd heel on this reluctant worm.

XVI.

O, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and dwindle
Into the hell from which it first was hurled,

[1] In Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions this word is omitted, and in its place are four asterisks, which have given rise to much discussion. *King* is the word in the extant fragment of the rough draft. Had the word in the MS. sent to the printer been *Christ*, to which word Mr. Swinburne strongly leans, there would probably have been six asterisks.

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A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure;
Till human thoughts might kneel alone
Each before the judgement-throne
Of its own aweless soul, or of the power unknown!
O, that the words which make the thoughts obscure
From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew
From a white lake blot heaven's blue portraiture,
Were stript of their thin masks and various hue
And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
Till in the nakedness of false and true
They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due.

XVII.

He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
Can be between the cradle and the grave
Crowned him the King of Life. O vain endeavour!
If on his own high will a willing slave,
He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.
What if earth can clothe and feed
Amplest millions at their need,
And power in thought be as the tree within the seed?
O, what if Art,[1] an ardent intercessor,
Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,
Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
And cries: Give me, thy child, dominion
Over all height and depth? if Life can breed
New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan
Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousand fold for one.

XVIII.

Come Thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star

[1] So in Shelley's edition; but in Mrs. Shelley's and Mr. Rossetti's, *Or what if, &c.* I cannot see sufficient grounds for adopting this change.

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Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,
Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame;
Comes she not, and come ye not,
Rulers of eternal thought,
To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportioned lot?
Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
Of what has been, the Hope of what will be?
O, Liberty! if such could be thy name
Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee:
If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
Wept tears, and blood like tears? The solemn harmony

XIX.

Paused, and the spirit of that mighty singing
To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;
Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
Sinks headlong through the aërial[1] golden light
On the heavy sounding plain,
When the bolt has pierced its brain;
As summer clouds dissolve, unburthened of their rain;
As a far taper fades with fading night,
As a brief insect dies with dying day,
My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
Drooped; o'er it closed the echoes far away
Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
As waves which lately paved his watery way
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

[1] In Shelley's edition, *aerial*.

THE END

[OF PROMETHEUS UNBOUND AND OTHER POEMS.]

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CANCELLED PASSAGE OF THE ODE TO LIBERTY.

WITHIN a cavern of man's trackless spirit
Is throned an Image, so intensely fair
That the adventurous thoughts that wander near it
Worship, and as they kneel tremble and wear
The splendour of its presence, and the light
Penetrates their dreamlike frame
Till they become charged with the strength of flame.

(GARNETT'S *Relics of Shelley*, p. 84.)

The imprint of *Prometheus Unbound &c.* is not at the bottom of the last page of poetry, but at the foot of the second of the two pages of advertisements, which are printed on the last leaf of the final sheet of the book. This imprint is as follows :—

Marchant, Printer, Ingram-Court, Fenchurch-Street, London.

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ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS;

OR,

SWELLFOOT THE TYRANT.

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[Mrs. Shelley records that *Œdipus Tyrannus* was begun in August 1820, at the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pisa: Shelley in reading his *Ode to Liberty*, was "riotously accompanied by the grunting of a quantity of pigs brought for sale to the fair" in the square underneath the windows of his residence there; and the struggle of George IV. to get rid of the claims of Queen Caroline being the current topic of conversation, that domestic episode seems to have combined in his mind with the porcine chorus, and to have borne fruit in this extraordinary piece of intellectual grotesque, with its clear undercurrent of the same serious spirit that inspired the *Ode to Liberty* itself. "When finished," says Mrs. Shelley, "it [*Œdipus Tyrannus*] was transmitted to England, printed and published anonymously; but stifled at the very dawn of its existence by the 'Society for the Suppression of Vice,' who threatened to prosecute it, if not immediately withdrawn. The friend who had taken the trouble of bringing it out, of course did not think it worth the annoyance and expense of a contest, and it was laid aside." The friend was Horace Smith. It was not revived in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839; but in her second it was. The original edition is an octavo pamphlet of five half-sheets "stabbed" together, without wrapper, consisting of title-page, a page of preface called "advertisement," with *Dramatis Personæ* on back, and text pp. 5 to 39. There is an imprint at the back of the title-page, "PRINTED by C. F. SEYFANG, 57, FLEET-MARKET." It is a very rough, common piece of printing; and has a general air of haste. The names of the speakers are usually at the beginning of the first line of each speech, abbreviated; but sometimes they are unabbreviated; and, as in *Prometheus*, they sometimes appear over the centre of the speech. I have followed Mrs. Shelley in putting all the names over the centre of the speeches, in full. The headlines are, on the left-hand pages, *Œdipus Tyrannus;* on the right-hand pages, *A Tragedy*. I am not aware of the existence of any autograph MS. of this work.—H. B. F.]

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ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS;

OR,

SWELLFOOT the TYRANT.

A Tragedy.

IN TWO ACTS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL DORIC.

——— Choose Reform or civil-war,
When thro' thy streets, instead of hare with dogs,
A CONSORT-QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs,
Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR,
BY J. JOHNSTON, 98, CHEAPSIDE, AND SOLD BY
ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1820.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

[BY SHELLEY.]

THIS TRAGEDY is one of a triad, or system of three Plays, (an arrangement according to which the Greeks were accustomed to connect their Dramatic representations,) elucidating the wonderful and appalling fortunes of the SWELLFOOT dynasty. It was evidently written by some *learned Theban*, and, from its characteristic dullness, apparently before the duties on the importation of *Attic salt* had been repealed by the Bœotarchs. The tenderness with which he treats[1] the PIGS proves him to have been a *sus Bœotiæ*; possibly *Epicuri de grege porcus*; for, as the poet observes,

"A fellow feeling makes us wond'rous kind."

No liberty has been taken with the translation of this remarkable piece of antiquity, except the suppressing a seditious and blasphemous Chorus of the Pigs and Bulls at the last act. The word Hoydipouse, (or more properly Œdipus,) has been rendered literally SWELLFOOT, without its having been conceived necessary to determine whether a swelling of the hind or the fore feet of the Swinish Monarch is particularly indicated.

Should the remaining portions of this Tragedy be found, entitled, "*Swellfoot in Angaria*," and "*Charité*," the Translator might be tempted to give them to the reading Public.

[1] In Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions the word here is *beats*. Mr. Rossetti prints *treats*, an emendation which must of course be accepted. The two words are very much alike when written rapidly by Shelley.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

TYRANT SWELLFOOT, King of Thebes.

IONA TAURINA, his Queen.

MAMMON, Arch-Priest of Famine.

PURGANAX[1]
DAKRY[2]
LAOCTONOS[3]
} Wizards, Ministers of SWELLFOOT.

The GADFLY	MOSES, the Sow-gelder.
The LEECH	SOLOMON, the Porkman.
The RAT	ZEPHANIAH, Pig Butcher.

The MINOTAUR.

Chorus of the Swinish Multitude.

GUARDS, ATTENDANTS, PRIESTS, &c., &c.

[1] Purganax is of course Lord Castlereagh. Mr. Rossetti, because the name is derived from πύργος (castle) and ἀναξ (King), sees fit to alter the spelling to *Pyrganax* throughout the poem, remarking that that "is the proper spelling." Surely when there are scholars who spell even *Olympus* with a *u* instead of a *y*, it must be a matter of opinion what is the "proper spelling" of Shelley's word; and surely, if he chose to give an English *u* as the equivalent for a Greek *υ*, his predilection should be respected.

[2] Dakry represents Lord Eldon.

[3] Laoctonos is Wellington.

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ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS,

A TRAGEDY.

In Two Acts.

SCENE.——THEBES.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A magnificent Temple, built of thigh-bones and death's heads, and tiled with scalps. Over the Altar the statue of Famine, veiled; a number of boars, sows, and sucking pigs, crowned with thistle, shamrock, and oak, sitting on the steps, and clinging round the altar of the Temple.*

Enter SWELLFOOT, *in his Royal robes, without perceiving the* PIGS.

SWELLFOOT.

THOU supreme Goddess! by whose power divine
These graceful limbs are clothed in proud array
(*He contemplates himself with satisfaction.*)
Of gold and purple, and this kingly paunch
Swells like a sail before a favouring breeze,
And these most sacred nether promontories
Lie satisfied with layers of fat; and these

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Bœotian cheeks, like Egypt's pyramid,
(Nor with less toil were their foundations laid,[1])
Sustain the cone of my untroubled brain,
That point, the emblem of a pointless nothing!
Thou to whom Kings and laurelled Emperors,
Radical-butchers, Paper-money-millers,
Bishops and deacons, and the entire army
Of those fat martyrs to the persecution
Of stifling turtle-soup, and brandy-devils,
Offer their secret vows! Thou plenteous Ceres
Of their Eleusis, hail![2]

THE SWINE.

Eigh! eigh! eigh! eigh!

SWELLFOOT.

Ha! what are ye,
Who, crowned with leaves devoted to the Furies,
Cling round this sacred shrine?

SWINE.

Aigh! aigh! aigh!

SWELLFOOT.

What! ye that are
The very beasts that offered at her altar

[1] See Universal History for an account of the number of people who died, and the immense consumption of garlick by the wretched Egyptians, who made a sepulchre for the name as well as the bodies of their tyrants. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

[2] In case some future editor may see cause to "reform" the metre of this interrupted portion of Swellfoot's speech, it may be worth while to note that it is not defective: the three utterances of The Swine are merely articulate interruptions (for which reason they are not taken into account in numbering the lines); and it will be observed that, eliminating these grunts, the iambic lines of Swellfoot's speech are unbroken and unimpeachable.

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With blood and groans, salt-cake, and fat, and inwards
Ever propitiate her reluctant will
When taxes are withheld?

SWINE.

Ugh! ugh! ugh!

SWELLFOOT.

What! ye who grub
With filthy snouts my red potatoes up
In Allan's rushy bog? Who eat the oats
Up, from my cavalry in the Hebrides?
Who swill the hog-wash soup my cooks digest
From bones, and rags, and scraps of shoe-leather,
Which should be given to cleaner Pigs than you?

THE SWINE.

Semichorus I.

The same, alas! the same;
Though only now the name
Of pig remains to me.

Semichorus II.

If 'twere your kingly will
Us wretched swine to kill,
What should we yield to thee?

SWELLFOOT.

Why skin and bones, and some few hairs for mortar.

CHORUS OF SWINE.

I have heard your Laureate sing,
That pity was a royal thing;
Under your mighty ancestors, we pigs

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Were bless'd as nightingales on myrtle sprigs,
Or grass-hoppers that live on noon-day dew,
And sung, old annals tell, as sweetly too,
But now our styes are fallen in, we catch
The murrain and the mange, the scab and itch;
Sometimes your royal dogs tear down our thatch,
And then we seek the shelter of a ditch;
Hog-wash or grains, or ruta baga, none
Has yet been ours since your reign begun.

FIRST SOW.

My pigs, 'tis in vain to tug.

SECOND SOW.

I could almost eat my litter.

FIRST PIG.

I suck, but no milk will come from the dug.

SECOND PIG.

Our skin and our bones would be bitter.

THE BOARS.

We fight for this rag of greasy rug,
Though a trough of wash would be fitter.

SEMICHORUS.

Happier swine were they than we,
Drowned in the Gadarean sea—
I wish that pity would drive out the devils,
Which in your royal bosom hold their revels,
And sink us in the waves of thy[1] compassion!
Alas! the Pigs are an unhappy nation!

[1] In Mrs. Shelley's edition, *your*.

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Now if your Majesty would have our bristles
To bind your mortar with, or fill our colons
With rich blood, or make brawn out of our gristles,
In policy—ask else your royal Solons—
You ought to give us hog-wash and clean straw,
And styes well thatched; besides it is the law!

SWELLFOOT.

This is sedition, and rank blasphemy!
Ho! there, my guards!

Enter a GUARD.

GUARD.

Your sacred Majesty.

SWELLFOOT.

Call in the Jews, Solomon the court porkman,
Moses the sow-gelder, and Zephaniah
The hog-butcher.[1]

GUARD.

They are in waiting, Sire.

Enter SOLOMON, MOSES, *and* ZEPHANIAH.

SWELLFOOT.

Out with your knife, old Moses, and spay those sows,
(*The pigs run about in consternation*)
That load the earth with pigs; cut close and deep,
Moral restraint I see has no effect,
Nor prostitution, nor our own example,
Starvation, typhus-fever, war, nor prison—
This was the art which the arch-priest of Famine

[1] In Shelley's edition and all others known to me the words *the hog-butcher*, clearly the complement of line 71, are printed at the end of line 70.

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Hinted at in his charge to the Theban clergy—
Cut close and deep, good Moses.

MOSES.

Let your Majesty
Keep the boars quiet, else——

SWELLFOOT.

Zephaniah, cut
That fat hog's throat, the brute seems overfed;
Seditious hunks! to whine for want of grains.

ZEPHANIAH.

Your sacred Majesty, he has the dropsy;—
We shall find pints of hydatids in's liver,
He has not half an inch of wholesome fat
Upon his carious ribs——

SWELLFOOT.

'Tis all the same,
He'll serve instead of riot money, when
Our murmuring troops bivouaque in Thebes' streets;
And January winds, after a day
Of butchering, will make them relish carrion.
Now, Solomon, I'll sell you in a lump
The whole kit of them.

SOLOMON.

Why, your Majesty,
I could not give——

SWELLFOOT.

Kill them out of the way,
That shall be price enough, and let me hear
Their everlasting grunts and whines no more!

(*Exeunt, driving in the swine.*)

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Enter MAMMON, *the Arch-Priest; and* PURGANAX,[1] *Chief of the Council of Wizards.*

PURGANAX.

The future looks as black as death, a cloud,
Dark as the frown of Hell, hangs over it—
The troops grow mutinous—the revenue fails—
There's something rotten in us—for the level
Of the State slopes, its very bases topple,
The boldest turn their backs upon themselves!

MAMMON.

Why what's the matter, my dear fellow, now?
Do the troops mutiny?—decimate some regiments;
Does money fail?—come to my mint—coin paper,
Till gold be at a discount, and ashamed
To show his bilious face, go purge himself,
In emulation of her vestal whiteness.

PURGANAX.

Oh, would that this were all! The oracle!!

MAMMON.

Why it was I who spoke that oracle,
And whether I was dead drunk or inspired,
I cannot well remember; nor, in truth,
The oracle itself!

PURGANAX.

The words went thus[2]:—

"Bœotia, choose reform or civil war!

[1] In Shelley's edition, in this stage direction, we read *Arch Priest*, in two words without a hyphen, and there is no comma at *Purganax*. *Arch-Priest* with the hyphen is usually found, as in the list of *dramatis personæ*, as in line 126 of this Act (see next page), and in the stage direction at the opening of Scene II of the Second Act.

[2] See supplementary note, at the end of the poem.

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"When through thy streets, instead of hare with dogs,
"A Consort Queen shall hunt a King with hogs,
"Riding on the Ionian Minotaur."

MAMMON.

Now if the oracle had ne'er foretold
This sad alternative, it must arrive,
Or not, and so it must now that it has,
And whether I was urged[1] by grace divine,
Or Lesbian liquor to declare these words,
Which must, as all words must, be false or true;
It matters not: for the same power made all,
Oracle, wine, and me and you—or none—
'Tis the same thing. If you knew as much[2]
Of oracles as I do——

PURGANAX.

You arch-priests
Believe in nothing; if you were to dream
Of a particular number in the Lottery,
You would not buy the ticket?[3]

MAMMON.

Yet our tickets
Are seldom blanks. But what steps have you taken?
For prophecies when once they get abroad,
Like liars who tell the truth to serve their ends,
Or hypocrites who, from assuming virtue,
Do the same actions that the virtuous do,
Contrive their own[4] fulfilment. This Iona———

[1] In Shelley's edition, *urg'd*.

[2] So in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions: Mr. Rossetti prints the line

'Tis the same thing. If you *but* knew as much;

but surely, if it be admissible to alter the line at all for the sake of the metre, it would be safer to give the initial word *It* in full, instead of abbreviating it.

[3] In Shelley's edition there is a note of interrogation here: Mrs. Shelley changes the sense by substituting a note of exclamation.

[4] The word *own* is not in Shelley's edition or Mrs. Shelley's second of 1839, wherein the poem was first reprinted; but it appears in some of her later editions.

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Well—you know what the chaste Pasiphae did,
Wife to that most religious King of Crete,
And still how popular the tale is here;
And these dull swine of Thebes boast their descent
From the free Minotaur. You know they still
Call themselves Bulls, though thus degenerate,
And every thing relating to a bull
Is popular and respectable in Thebes.
Their arms are seven bulls in a field gules,[1]
They think their strength consists in eating beef,—
Now there were danger in the precedent
If Queen Iona——

PURGANAX.

I have taken good care
That shall not be. I struck the crust o' the earth
With this enchanted rod, and Hell lay bare!
And from a cavern full of ugly shapes,
I chose a LEECH, a GADFLY, and a RAT.
The gadfly was the same which Juno sent
To agitate Io,[2] and which Ezechiel* mentions
That the Lord whistled for out of the mountains
Of utmost Æthiopia,[3] to torment
Mesopotamian Babylon. The beast

* And the Lord whistled for the gadfly out of Æthiopia, and for the bee of Egypt, &c.—EZECHIEL. [SHELLEY'S NOTE, in which, in his edition, *Æthiopia* is spelt *Œthiopia*.]

[1] Has this curious piece of heraldry reference to the six leopards and the lion rampant which figure on the Royal Standard?

[2] Shelley's reference here to the *Prometheus Bound* is very curiously printed in the original edition, namely thus,—"The prometheus bound of Æschylus." This probably arose from the effect, on an ignorant compositor, of Shelley's practice of writing titles without either inverted commas or marks to signify Italics, and his frequent use of a small *p* rather larger than usual to serve as a capital.

[3] Curiously enough, in Shelley's edition, this word is here spelt in the orthodox way, *Ethiopia*. I believe Shelley habitually wrote it with an *Æ* diphthong; and in those instances in which I have seen the MS. his *Æ* diphthong capital is absolutely indistinguishable from *Œ* diphthong,—which fact would account for the very odd orthography in his note, above.

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Has a loud trumpet like the Scarabee,
His crookèd tail is barbed with many stings,
Each able to make a thousand wounds, and each
Immedicable; from his convex eyes
He sees fair things in many hideous shapes,
And trumpets all his falsehood to the world.
Like other beetles he is fed on dung—
He has eleven feet with which he crawls,
Trailing a blistering slime, and this foul beast
Has tracked Iona from the Theban limits,
From isle to isle, from city unto city,
Urging her flight from the far Chersonese
To fabulous Solyma, and the Ætnean Isle,
Ortygia, Melite, and Calypso's Rock,
And the swart tribes of Garamant and Fez,
Æolia and Elysium, and thy shores,
Parthenope, which now, alas! are free!
And through the fortunate Saturnian land,
Into the darkness of the West.

MAMMON.

But if
This Gadfly should drive Iona hither?[1]

PURGANAX.

Gods! what an *if!* but there is my grey RAT:
So thin with want, he can crawl in and out
Of any narrow chink and filthy hole,
And he shall creep into her dressing-room,
And———

[1] So in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions; but, as the line is short and defective, it seems most probable that the right reading would be *Queen Iona*, as in line 193. It might, however, equally well be *This Gadfly now should drive*, &c. Mr. Rossetti prints *hither* in Italics; but that does not mend the line. He suggests the insertion of *but* after *should*; but that would clash with *But* in the previous line.

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MAMMON.

My dear friend, where are your wits? as if
She does not always toast a piece of cheese
And bait the trap? and rats, when lean enough
To crawl through *such* chinks——

PURGANAX.

But my LEECH—a leech
Fit to suck blood, with lubricous round rings,
Capaciously expatiative, which make
His little body like a red balloon,
As full of blood as that of hydrogene,
Sucked from men's hearts; insatiably he sucks
And clings, and pulls—a horse-leech, whose deep maw
The plethoric King Swellfoot could not fill,
And who, till full, will cling for ever.

MAMMON.

This
For Queen Iona might suffice, and less;
But 'tis the swinish multitude I fear,
And in that fear I have——

PURGANAX.

Done what?

MAMMON.

Disinherited
My eldest son Chrysaor, because he
Attended public meetings, and would always
Stand prating there of commerce, public faith,
Economy, and unadulterate coin,
And other topics, ultra-radical;
And have entailed my estate, called the Fool's Paradise,
And funds in fairy-money, bonds, and bills,

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Upon my accomplished daughter Banknotina,
And married her to the gallows.[1]

PURGANAX.

A good match!

MAMMON.

A high connection, Purganax. The bridegroom
Is of a very ancient family,
Of Hounslow Heath, Tyburn, and the New Drop,
And has great influence in both Houses;—Oh!
He makes the fondest husband; nay, *too* fond,—
New married people should not kiss in public;
But the poor souls love one another so!
And then my little grandchildren, the gibbets,
Promising children as you ever saw,—
The young playing at hanging, the elder learning
How to hold radicals. They are well taught too,
For every gibbet says its catechism
And reads a select chapter in the Bible
Before it goes to play.

(*A most tremendous humming is heard.*)

PURGANAX.

Ha! what do I hear?

Enter the GADFLY.[2]

MAMMON.

Your Gadfly, as it seems, is tired of gadding.

[1] If one should marry a gallows, and beget young gibbets, I never saw one so prone.—CYMBELINE. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

[2] So in Shelley's edition: in Mrs. Shelley's the stage direction is *Enter Gadfly*: in Mr. Rossetti's it is *Enter Gadfly followed by Leech and Rat.*

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GADFLY.

Hum! hum! hum!
From the lakes of the Alps, and the cold grey scalps
Of the mountains, I come,
Hum! hum! hum!
From Morocco and Fez, and the high palaces
Of golden Byzantium;
From the temples divine of old Palestine,
From Athens and Rome,
With a ha! and a hum!
I come! I come!

All inn-doors and windows
Were open to me:
I saw all that sin does,
Which lamps hardly see
That burn in the night by the curtained bed,—
The impudent lamps! for they blushed not red,
Dinging and singing,
From slumber I rung her,
Loud as the clank of an ironmonger;
Hum! hum! hum!

Far, far, far!
With the trump of my lips, and the sting at my hips,
I drove her—afar!
Far, far, far!
From city to city, abandoned of pity,
A ship without needle or star;—
Homeless she past, like a cloud on the blast,
Seeking peace, finding war;—
She is here in her car,
From afar, and afar;—
Hum! hum!

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I have stung her and wrung her,
The venom is working;—
And if you had hung her
With canting and quirking,
She could not be deader than she will be soon;—
I have driven her close to you, under the moon,
Night and day, hum! hum! ha!
I have hummed her and drummed her
From place to place, till at last I have dumbed her,[1]
Hum! hum! hum!

LEECH.

I will suck
Blood or muck!
The disease of the state is a plethory,
Who so fit to reduce it as I?

RAT.

I'll slily seize and
Let blood from her weasand,—
Creeping through crevice, and chink, and cranny,
With my snakey tail, and my sides so scranny.

PURGANAX.

Aroint ye! thou unprofitable worm!
(*to the Leech*)
And thou, dull beetle, get thee back to hell!
(*to the Gadfly*)
To sting the ghosts of Babylonian kings,
And the ox-headed Io——

[1] In Shelley's edition, in these two lines, we read *humm'd, drumm'd* and *dumb'd*,—an exception to his practice, but possibly intentional here.

[2] It seems to me that the missing stage direction to account for the presence of the Leech and the Rat should be here; but it is in all probability owing to Shelley's own oversight that we do not read *Enter the Leech and the Rat.*

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SWINE (*within*).

Ugh, ugh, ugh!
Hail! Iona the divine,
We will be no longer swine,
But bulls with horns and dewlaps.

RAT.

For,
You know, my lord, the Minotaur——

PURGANAX (*fiercely*).

Be silent! get to hell! or I will call
The cat out of the kitchen.[1] Well, Lord Mammon,
This is a pretty business.

(*Exit the Rat.*)

MAMMON.

I will go
And spell some scheme to make it ugly then.—

(*Exit.*)

Enter SWELLFOOT.

SWELLFOOT.

She is returned! Taurina is in Thebes
When Swellfoot wishes that she were in hell!
Oh, Hymen, clothed in yellow jealousy,
And waving o'er the couch of wedded kings
The torch of discord with its fiery hair;
This is thy work, thou patron saint of queens!
Swellfoot is wived! though parted by the sea,
The very name of wife had conjugal rights;
Her cursèd image ate, drank, slept with me,

[1] This full-stop is wanting in Shelley's edition; but there is a long space between the words *kitchen* and *Well;* and the omission was obviously accidental.

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And in the arms of Adiposa oft
Her memory has received a husband's——

A loud tumult, and cries of "Iona for ever!—No Swellfoot!"

SWELLFOOT.

Hark!

How the swine cry Iona Taurina;
I suffer the real presence; Purganax,
Off with her head!

PURGANAX.

But I must first impanel[1]
A jury of the pigs.

SWELLFOOT.

Pack them then.[2]

PURGANAX.

Or fattening some few in two separate styes,
And giving them clean straw, tying some bits
Of ribbon round their legs—giving their sows
Some tawdry lace, and bits of lustre glass,
And their young boars white and red rags, and tails
Of cows, and jay feathers, and sticking cauliflowers
Between the ears of the old ones; and when
They are persuaded, that by the inherent virtue
Of these things, they are all imperial pigs,
Good Lord! they'd rip each other's bellies up,
Not to say help us in destroying her.

[1] In Shelley's edition, *impannel*.

[2] To get over the defectiveness of metre here, Mr. Rossetti thinks *go pack them then* "would not be a very daring emendation." I should incline to *Well, pack them then*, as more probably what Shelley wrote.

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SWELLFOOT.

This plan might be tried too;—where's General
Laoctonos?[1]

Enter LAOCTONOS *and* DAKRY.

It is my royal pleasure
That you, Lord General, bring the head and body,
If separate it would please me better, hither
Of Queen Iona.

LAOCTONOS.

That pleasure I well knew,
And made a charge with those battalions bold,
Called, from their dress and grin, the royal apes,
Upon the swine, who, in a hollow square
Enclosed her, and received the first attack
Like so many rhinoceroses, and then
Retreating in good order, with bare tusks
And wrinkled snouts presented to the foe,
Bore her in triumph to the public stye.
What is still worse, some sows upon the ground
Have given the ape-guards apples, nuts, and gin,
And they all whisk their tails aloft, and cry,
"Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!"

PURGANAX.

Hark!

THE SWINE, *without.*

Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!

[1] In Shelley's edition, and others earlier than Mr. Rossetti's, the word *Laoctonos* is printed as part of line 307.

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DAKRY.

I
Went to the garret of the swineherd's tower,
Which overlooks the stye, and made a long
Harangue (all words) to the assembled swine,
Of delicacy, mercy, judgment, law,
Morals, and precedents, and purity,
Adultery, destitution, and divorce,
Piety, faith, and state necessity,
And how I loved the Queen!—and then I wept
With the pathos of my own eloquence,
And every tear turned to a mill-stone, which
Brained many a gaping pig,[1] and there was made
A slough of blood and brains upon the place,
Greased with the pounded bacon; round and round
The mill-stones[2] rolled, ploughing the pavement up,
And hurling sucking pigs into the air,
With dust and stones.——

Enter MAMMON.

MAMMON.

I wonder that grey wizards
Like you should be so beardless in their schemes;
It had been but a point of policy
To keep Iona and the swine apart.
Divide and rule! but ye have made a junction
Between two parties who will govern you
But for my art.—Behold this BAG! it is
The poison BAG of that Green Spider huge,

[1] This grotesque version of the same imagery as is applied to Lord Eldon in *The Mask of Anarchy*, would serve, if need were, to identify that Lord Chancellor with Dakry:

His big tears, for he wept well,
Turned to mill-stones where they fell.
And the little children, who
Round his feet played to and fro,
Thinking every tear a gem,
Had their brains knocked out by them.

[2] In Shelley's edition, *millstones*, without a hyphen, though the word is spelt with a hyphen in line 334, and in the MS. of *The Mask of Anarchy*, in the passage just quoted.

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On which our spies skulked in ovation through
The streets of Thebes, when they were paved with dead:
A bane so much the deadlier fills it now,
As calumny is worse than death,—for here
The Gadfly's venom, fifty times distilled,
Is mingled with the vomit of the Leech,
In due proportion, and black ratsbane, which
That very Rat, who, like the Pontic tyrant,
Nurtures himself on poison, dare not touch;—
All is sealed up with the broad seal of Fraud,
Who is the Devil's Lord High Chancellor,[1]
And over it the Primate of all Hell
Murmured this pious baptism:—"Be thou called
"The GREEN BAG; and this power and grace be thine:
"That thy contents, on whomsoever poured,
"Turn innocence to guilt, and gentlest looks
"To savage, foul, and fierce deformity.
"Let all baptized by thy infernal dew
"Be called adulterer, drunkard, liar, wretch!
"No name left out which orthodoxy loves,
"Court Journal or legitimate Review!—
"Be they called tyrant, beast, fool, glutton, lover
"Of other wives and husbands than their own—
"The heaviest sin on this side of the Alps!
"Wither they to a ghastly caricature
"Of what was human!—let not man or[2] beast
"Behold their face with unaverted eyes!
"Or hear their names with ears that tingle not
"With blood of indignation, rage, and shame!"—
This is a perilous liquor;—good my Lords.—

SWELLFOOT *approaches to touch the* GREEN BAG.

[1] *Cf. Mask of Anarchy* again:

Next came Fraud, and he had on,
Like Eldon, an ermine gown.

[2] So in Shelley's edition, of course rightly; but *nor* in Mrs. Shelley's.

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Beware! for God's sake, beware!—if you should break
The seal, and touch the fatal liquor——

PURGANAX.

There,
Give it to me. I have been used to handle
All sorts of poisons. His dread Majesty[1]
Only desires to see the colour of it.

MAMMON.

Now, with a little common sense, my Lords,
Only undoing all that has been done,
(Yet so as it may seem we but confirm it,)
Our victory is assured. We must entice
Her Majesty from the stye, and make the pigs
Believe that the contents of the GREEN BAG
Are the true test of guilt or innocence.
And that, if she be guilty, 'twill transform her
To manifest deformity like guilt.
If innocent, she will become transfigured
Into an angel, such as they say she is;
And they will see her flying through the air,
So bright that she will dim the noon-day sun;
Showering down blessings in the shape of comfits.
This, trust a priest, is just the sort of thing
Swine will believe. I'll wager you will see them
Climbing upon the thatch of their low styes,
With pieces of smoked glass, to watch her sail
Among the clouds, and some will hold the flaps
Of one another's ears between their teeth,
To catch the coming hail of comfits in.
You, Purganax, who have the gift o' the gab,
Make them a solemn speech to this effect:

[1] In Shelley's edition *majesty*, in this one instance, is spelt with a small *m*.

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I go to put in readiness the feast
Kept to the honour of our goddess Famine,
Where, for more glory, let the ceremony
Take place of the uglification of the Queen.

DAKRY (*to Swellfoot*).

I, as the keeper of your sacred conscience,
Humbly remind your Majesty that the care
Of your high office, as man-milliner
To red Bellona, should not be deferred.

PURGANAX.

All part, in happier plight to meet again.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

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ACT II.

SCENE I.—THE PUBLIC STYE.

The Boars in full Assembly.

Enter PURGANAX.

PURGANAX.

GRANT me your patience, Gentlemen and Boars,
Ye, by whose patience under public burthens
The glorious constitution of these styes
Subsists, and shall subsist. The lean-pig rates
Grow with the growing populace of swine,
The taxes, that true source of piggishness,
(How can I find a more appropriate term
To include religion, morals, peace, and plenty,
And all that fit Bœotia as a nation
To teach the other nations how to live?)
Increase with piggishness itself; and still
Does the revenue, that great spring of all
The patronage, and pensions, and by-payments,
Which free-born pigs regard with jealous eyes,
Diminish, till at length, by glorious steps,
All the land's[1] produce will be merged in taxes,
And the revenue will amount to——nothing!
The failure of a foreign market for
Sausages, bristles, and blood-puddings,

[1] In Shelley's edition we read *lands* instead of *land's*.

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And such home manufactures, is but partial;
And, that the population of the pigs,
Instead of hog-wash, has been fed on straw
And water, is a fact which is—you know—
That is—it is a state-necessity—
Temporary, of course. Those impious pigs,
Who, by frequent squeaks, have dared impugn[1]
The settled Swellfoot system, or to make
Irreverent mockery of the genuflexions
Inculcated by the arch-priest, have been whipt
Into a loyal and an orthodox whine.
Things being in this happy state, the Queen
Iona———

A loud cry from the PIGS.

She is innocent! most innocent!

PURGANAX.

That is the very thing that I was saying,
Gentlemen Swine; the Queen Iona being
Most innocent, no doubt, returns to Thebes,
And the lean sows and boars collect about her,
Wishing to make her think that WE believe
(I mean those more substantial pigs, who swill
Rich hog-wash, while the others mouth damp straw,)
That she is guilty; thus, the lean-pig faction
Seeks to obtain that hog-wash, which has been
Your immemorial right, and which I will
Maintain you in to the last drop of———

[1] So in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions; but there is clearly something wrong: Mr. Rossetti reconstructed the line thus:

Who *have*, by frequent squeaks, dared *to* impugn;

but the rhythm thus produced is not Shelley-like; nor can one see how such a line could have been misinterpreted into the line as printed in the text. I have little doubt that the very common printer's error of dropping some minor word was at the root of the imperfection; and should think the line was probably written thus:

Who, by *their* frequent squeaks, have dared impugn.

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A BOAR.

(*interrupting him.*)

What

Does any one accuse her of?

PURGANAX.

Why, no one

Makes *any* positive accusation;—but

There were hints dropt, and so the privy wizards

Conceived that it became them to advise

His Majesty to investigate their truth;—

Not for his own sake; he could be content

To let his wife play any pranks she pleased,

If, by that sufferance, *he* could please the pigs;

But then he fears the morals of the swine,

The sows especially, and what effect

It might produce upon the purity and

Religion of the rising generation

Of sucking pigs, if it could be suspected

That Queen Iona———

(*A pause.*)

FIRST BOAR.

Well, go on; we long

To hear what she can possibly have done.

PURGANAX.

Why, it is hinted, that a certain bull—

Thus much is *known*:—the milk-white bulls that feed

Beside Clitumnus and the crystal[1] lakes

Of the Cisalpine mountains, in fresh dews

Of lotus-grass and blossoming asphodel,

Sleeking their silken hair, and with sweet breath

[1] In Shelley's edition, *chrystal.*

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Loading the morning winds until they faint
With living fragrance, are so beautiful!——
Well, *I* say nothing;——but Europa rode
On such a one from Asia into Crete,
And the enamoured sea grew calm beneath
His gliding beauty. And Pasiphae,[1]
Iona's grandmother,——but *she* is innocent!
And that both you and I, and all assert.

FIRST BOAR.

Most innocent!

PURGANAX.

Behold this BAG; a bag———

SECOND BOAR.

Oh! no GREEN BAGS!! Jealousy's eyes are green,
Scorpions are green, and water-snakes, and efts,
And verdigris, and————

PURGANAX.

Honourable swine,
In piggish souls can prepossessions reign?
Allow me to remind you, grass is green—
All flesh is grass;—no bacon but is flesh—
Ye are but bacon. This divining BAG
(Which is not green, but only bacon colour)
Is filled with liquor, which if sprinkled o'er
A woman guilty of—we all know what—
Makes her so hideous, till she finds one blind
She never can commit the like again.
If innocent, she will turn into an angel,
And rain down blessings in the shape of comfits

[1] In Shelley's edition, *Pasiphæ*.

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As she flies up to heaven. Now, my proposal
Is to convert her sacred Majesty
Into an angel, (as I am sure we shall do,)
By pouring on her head this mystic water.
(*Shewing the Bag.*)
I know that she is innocent; I wish
Only to prove her so to all the world.

FIRST BOAR.

Excellent, just, and noble Purganax.

SECOND BOAR.

How glorious it will be to see her Majesty
Flying above our heads, her petticoats
Streaming like—like—like—

THIRD BOAR.

Any thing.

PURGANAX.

Oh, no!
But like a standard of an admiral's ship,
Or like the banner of a conquering host,
Or like a cloud dyed in the dying day,
Unravelled on the blast from a white mountain;
Or like a meteor, or a war-steed's mane,
Or water-fall from a dizzy precipice
Scattered upon the wind.

FIRST BOAR.

Or a cow's tail,——

SECOND BOAR.

Or *any thing*, as the learned Boar observed.

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PURGANAX.

Gentlemen Boars, I move a resolution,
That her most sacred Majesty should be
Invited to attend the feast of Famine,
And to receive upon her chaste white body
Dews of Apotheosis from this BAG.

A great confusion is heard of the PIGS OUT OF DOORS, *which communicates itself to those within. During the first Strophe, the doors of the Stye are staved in, and a number of exceedingly lean Pigs and Sows and Boars rush in.*

SEMICHORUS I.

No! Yes!

SEMICHORUS II.

Yes! No!

SEMICHORUS I.

A law!

SEMICHORUS II.

A flaw!

SEMICHORUS I.

Porkers, we shall lose our wash,
Or must share it with the lean pigs!

FIRST BOAR.

Order! order! be not rash!
Was there ever such a scene, Pigs!

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AN OLD SOW (*rushing in*).

I never saw so fine a dash
Since I first began to wean pigs.

SECOND BOAR (*solemnly*).

The Queen will be an angel time enough.
I vote, in form of an amendment, that
Purganax rub a little of that stuff
Upon his face———

PURGANAX.

(*His heart is seen to beat through his waistcoat.*)

Gods! What would ye be at?

SEMICHORUS I.

Purganax has plainly shown a
Cloven foot and jack-daw feather.

SEMICHORUS II.

I vote Swellfoot and Iona
Try the magic test together;
Whenever royal spouses bicker,
Both should try the magic liquor.

AN OLD BOAR (*aside*).

A miserable state is that of pigs,
For if their drivers would tear caps and wigs,
The swine must bite each other's ear therefore.

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AN OLD SOW (*aside*).

A wretched lot Jove has assigned to swine,
Squabbling makes pig-herds hungry, and they dine
On bacon, and whip sucking-pigs the more.

CHORUS.

Hog-wash has been ta'en away:
If the Bull-Queen is divested,
We shall be in every way
Hunted, stript, exposed, molested;
Let us do whate'er we may,
That she shall not be arrested.
QUEEN, we entrench you with walls of brawn,
And palisades[1] of tusks, sharp as a bayonet:
Place your most sacred person here. We pawn
Our lives that none a finger dare to lay on it.
Those who wrong you, wrong us;
Those who hate you, hate us;
Those who sting you, sting us;
Those who bait you, bait us;
The *oracle* is now about to be
Fulfilled by circumvolving destiny;
Which says[2]: "Thebes, choose *reform* or *civil war*,
"When through your streets, instead of hare with dogs,
"A CONSORT QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs,
Riding upon the IONIAN MINOTAUR."

Enter IONA TAURINA.

IONA TAURINA (*coming forward*).

Gentlemen swine, and gentle lady-pigs,
The tender heart of every boar acquits

[1] In Shelley's edition, *pallisades*, with a double *l*.

[2] See supplementary note at the end of the poem.

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Their QUEEN, of any act incongruous
With native piggishness, and she reposing
With confidence upon the grunting nation,
Has thrown herself, her cause, her life, her all,
Her innocence, into their hoggish arms;
Nor has the expectation been deceived
Of finding shelter there. Yet know, great boars,
(For such who ever lives among you finds you,
And so do I) the innocent are proud!
I have accepted your protection only
In compliment of your kind love and care,
Not for necessity. The innocent
Are safest there where trials and dangers wait;
Innocent Queens o'er white-hot plough-shares tread
Unsinged, and ladies, Erin's laureate sings it,[1]
Decked with rare gems, and beauty rarer still,
Walked[2] from Killarney to the Giant's Causeway,
Through rebels, smugglers, troops of yeomanry,
White boys and orange boys, and constables,
Tithe-proctors, and excise people, uninjured!
Thus I!———
Lord PURGANAX, I do commit myself
Into your custody, and am prepared
To stand the test, whatever it may be!

PURGANAX.

This magnanimity in your sacred Majesty
Must please the pigs. You cannot fail of being
A heavenly angel. Smoke your bits of glass,
Ye loyal swine, or her transfiguration
Will blind your wondering eyes.

[1] Rich and rare were the gems she wore. *See Moore's Irish Melodies.* [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

[2] In Shelley's edition, *walk'd.*

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AN OLD BOAR (*aside*).

Take care, my Lord,
They do not smoke you first.

PURGANAX.

At the approaching feast
Of Famine, let the expiation be.

SWINE.

Content! content!

IONA TAURINA (*aside*).

I, most content of all,
Know that my foes even thus prepare their fall!

[*Exeunt omnes.*

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SCENE II.

The interior of the Temple of FAMINE. The statue of the Goddess, a skeleton clothed in party-coloured rags, seated upon a heap of skulls and loaves intermingled. A number of exceedingly fat Priests in black garments arrayed on each side, with marrow-bones and cleavers in their hands. A flourish of trumpets.

Enter MAMMON *as arch-priest*, SWELLFOOT, DAKRY, PURGANAX, LAOCTONOS, *followed by* IONA TAURINA *guarded. On the other side enter the* SWINE.

Chorus of PRIESTS,
Accompanied by the Court Porkman[1] *on marrow-bones and cleavers.*

GODDESS bare, and gaunt, and pale,
Empress of the world, all hail!
What though Cretans old called thee
City-crested Cybele?
We call thee FAMINE!
Goddess of fasts and feasts, starving and cramming!
Through thee, for emperors, kings, and priests and lords,

[1] This word is *Porkman* in all editions except that of Mr. Rossetti, who substituted *Porkmen*. I cannot, however, think it safe to adopt either this or the alteration he made in the scene-description,—the insertion of *Court Porkmen* so as to deprive the fat Priests of their marrow-bones and cleavers. I feel pretty sure that the picture Shelley had in his mind was one of Priests bearing marrow-bones and cleavers. What particular value he may have meant to attach to the phrase "Accompanied by the Court Porkman on marrow-bones and cleavers," is not very clear; but probably the idea was that the Court Porkman played, while the Priests both played and sang. The introduction of Court Porkmen in the plural is wholly inconsistent with the list of *dramatis personæ* and line 69 of Act I: in the one case we have "Solomon, the Porkman," and in the other "Solomon the court porkman,"—indicating, I think, that there was but one such dignitary in Thebes.

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Who rule by viziers, sceptres, banknotes, words,
The earth pours forth its plenteous fruits,
Corn, wool, linen, flesh, and roots—
Those who consume these fruits thro' thee grow fat,
Those who produce these fruits thro' thee grow lean,
Whatever change takes place, oh, stick to that!
And let things be as they have ever been;
At least while we remain thy priests,
And proclaim thy fasts and feasts!
Through thee the sacred SWELLFOOT dynasty
Is based upon a rock amid that sea
Whose waves are swine—so let it ever be!

SWELLFOOT, &c. seat themselves at a table, magnificently covered at the upper end of the temple. Attendants pass over the stage with hog-wash in pails. A number of pigs, exceedingly lean, follow them licking up the wash.

MAMMON.

I fear your sacred Majesty has lost
The appetite which you were used to have.
Allow me now to recommend this dish—
A simple kickshaw by your Persian cook,
Such as is served at the great King's second table.
The price and pains which its ingredients cost,
Might have maintained some dozen families
A winter or two—not more—so plain a dish
Could scarcely disagree.——

SWELLFOOT.

After the trial,
And these fastidious pigs are gone, perhaps
I may recover my lost appetite,—
I feel the gout flying about my stomach—
Give me a glass of Maraschino punch.

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PURGANAX

(*Filling his glass, and standing up*).

The glorious constitution of the Pigs!

ALL.

A toast! a toast! stand up and three times three!

DAKRY.

No heel-taps—darken day-lights!—

LAOCTONOS.

Claret, somehow,
Puts me in mind of blood, and blood of claret!

SWELLFOOT.

Laoctonos is fishing for a compliment,
But 'tis his due. Yes, you have drunk more wine,
And shed more blood than any man in Thebes.
(*To Purganax*)
For God's sake stop the grunting of those pigs!

PURGANAX.

We dare not, Sire, 'tis Famine's privilege.

CHORUS OF SWINE.

Hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!
Thy throne is on blood, and thy robe is of rags;
Thou devil which livest on damning;
Saint of new churches, and cant, and GREEN BAGS,
Till in pity and terror thou risest,
Confounding the schemes of the wisest,
When thou liftest thy skeleton form,
When the loaves and the skulls roll about,

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We will greet thee—the voice of a storm
Would be lost in our terrible shout!

Then hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!
Hail to thee, Empress of Earth!
When thou risest, dividing possessions;
When thou risest, uprooting oppressions;
In the pride of thy ghastly mirth.
Over palaces, temples, and graves,
We will rush as thy minister-slaves,
Trampling behind in thy train,
Till all be made level again!

MAMMON.

I hear a crackling of the giant bones
Of the dread image, and in the black pits
Which once were eyes, I see two livid flames.
These prodigies are oracular, and show
The presence of the unseen Deity.
Mighty events are hastening to their doom!

SWELLFOOT.

I only hear the lean and mutinous swine
Grunting about the temple.

DAKRY.

In a crisis
Of such exceeding delicacy, I think
We ought to put her Majesty, the QUEEN,
Upon her trial without delay.

MAMMON.

THE BAG
Is here.

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PURGANAX.

I have rehearsed the entire scene
With an ox bladder and some ditch-water,
On Lady P.—it cannot fail.

(*Taking up the bag*)

Your Majesty (*to Swellfoot*)
In such a filthy business had better
Stand on one side, lest it should sprinkle you,
A spot or two on me would do no harm,
Nay, it might hide the blood, which the sad genius
Of the Green Isle has fixed, as by a spell,
Upon my brow—which would stain all its seas,
But which those seas could never wash away!

IONA TAURINA.

My Lord, I am ready—nay, I am impatient
To undergo the test.

A graceful figure in a semi-transparent veil passes unnoticed through the Temple; the word LIBERTY is seen through the veil, as if it were written in fire upon its forehead. Its words are almost drowned in the furious grunting of the Pigs, and the business of the trial. She kneels on the steps of the Altar, and speaks in tones at first faint and low, but which ever become louder and louder.

Mighty Empress! Death's white wife!
Ghastly mother-in-law of life!
By the God who made thee such,
By the magic of thy touch,
By the starving and the cramming,
Of fasts and feasts! by thy dread self, O Famine
I charge thee! when thou wake the multitude

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Thou lead them not upon the paths of blood,
The earth did never mean her foison[1]
For those who crown life's cup with poison
Of fanatic rage and meaningless revenge—
But for those radiant spirits, who are still
The standard-bearers in the van of Change.
Be they th' appointed stewards, to fill
The lap of Pain, and Toil, and Age!—
Remit, O Queen! thy accustomed[2] rage!
Be what thou art not! In voice faint and low
FREEDOM calls *Famine*,—her eternal foe,
To brief alliance, hollow truce.—Rise now!

Whilst the veiled Figure has been chaunting this strophe, MAMMON, DAKRY, LAOCTONOS, *and* SWELLFOOT, *have surrounded* IONA TAURINA, *who, with her hands folded on her breast, and her eyes lifted to Heaven, stands, as with saint-like resignation, to wait the issue of the business, in perfect confidence of her innocence.*

PURGANAX, *after unsealing the GREEN BAG, is gravely about to pour the liquor upon her head, when suddenly the whole expression of her figure and countenance changes; she snatches it from his hand with a loud laugh of triumph, and empties it over* SWELLFOOT *and his whole Court, who are instantly changed into a number of filthy and ugly animals, and rush out of the Temple. The image of* FAMINE *then arises with a tremendous sound, the* PIGS *begin scrambling for the loaves, and are tripped up by the skulls*[3]*; all those who* EAT *the loaves are turned into* BULLS, *and arrange themselves quietly behind the altar. The image of* FAMINE *sinks through a chasm in the earth, and a* MINOTAUR *rises.*

[1] In Shelley's edition, *foizon*, as in line 228 of the *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills*.
[2] In Shelley's edition, *accustom'd*.
[3] In Shelley's edition, *sculls*, in this instance; but, as the word is spelt *skulls* in his edition in the scene-description at the beginning of this scene, and also in line 49, I presume we should give the preference to *skulls*.

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MINOTAUR.

I am the Ionian Minotaur, the mightiest
Of all Europa's taurine progeny—
I am the old traditional man-bull;
And from my ancestors having been Ionian,
I am called Ion, which, by interpretation,
Is JOHN; in plain Theban, that is to say,
My name's JOHN BULL; I am a famous hunter,
And can leap any gate in all Bœotia,
Even the palings of the royal park,
Or double ditch about the new enclosures;
And if your Majesty will deign to mount me,
At least till you have hunted down your game,
I will not throw you.

IONA TAURINA.

(*During this speech she has been putting on boots and spurs, and a hunting cap, buckishly cocked on one side, and tucking up her hair, she leaps nimbly on his back.*)

Hoa! hoa! tallyho! tallyho! ho! ho!
Come, let us hunt these ugly badgers down,
These stinking foxes, these devouring otters,
These hares, these wolves, these any thing but men.
Hey, for a whipper-in! my loyal pigs,
Now let your noses be as keen as beagles,
Your steps as swift as greyhounds, and your cries
More dulcet and symphonious than the bells
Of village-towers, on sunshine holiday;
Wake all the dewy woods with jangling music.
Give them no law (are they not beasts of blood?)
But such as they gave you. Tallyho! ho!
Through forest, furze, and bog, and den, and desart,
Pursue the ugly beasts! tallyho! ho!

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Full Chorus of IONA *and the* SWINE.

Tallyho! tallyho!
Through rain, hail, and snow,
Through brake, gorse, and briar,
Through fen, flood, and mire,
We go! we go!

Tallyho! tallyho!
Through pond, ditch, and slough,
Wind them, and find them,
Like the Devil behind them,
Tallyho! tallyho!

(*Exeunt, in full cry; IONA driving on the SWINE, with the empty GREEN BAG.*)

THE END.

[OF ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS.]

The imprint of *Œdipus Tyrannus* is as follows:—

C. F. SEYFANG, Printer 57, Fleet Market.

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[A very curious case of minute verbal and other variation is that of "the oracle," which first appears on the title-page of *Swellfoot*, and then occurs twice in the text of the poem. I have given it on the title-page precisely from Shelley's edition, in the minutest particulars: when PURGANAX utters it in Act I, beginning at line 112, it stands thus in the original edition:

> Bœotia, choose reform or civil war!
> When through the streets, instead of hare with dogs,
> A Consort Queen shall hunt a King with hogs,
> Riding on the Ionian Minotaur.

Here I have not thought it necessary to interfere with anything in the text except the word *the* in the second line of the oracle: that word, I have not the least doubt, is a misprint for *thy*; but I do not suppose the other variations were the printer's doing; and the note of exclamation at the end of the first line seems likely enough to have been deliberate. When the Chorus repeats the oracle in Act II, Sc. I, beginning at line 153, it runs, in Shelley's edition, thus:

> Thebes, choose *reform* or *civil war*,
> When through your streets instead of hare with dogs,
> A CONSORT QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs,
> Riding upon the IONIAN MINOTAUR.

In that case I have supplied, in the text, a comma after *streets* in the second line, because, whether Shelley or the printer dropped it, the omission must have been purely accidental, and damages the sense. But in regard to *your* for *thy* in the second line, and *upon* for *on* in the fourth, I should not doubt that those variations would have been left as they are, even if Shelley's attention had been called to them. If any one had asked him, "Why don't your people repeat the oracle correctly?"—he might fairly have answered, "Because real people don't repeat anything correctly in minute particulars": and, as regards the variations in the matter of italics, capitals, and so on, they probably place the stress more precisely where Shelley meant it to fall in each instance than would be the case if we ventured to print the oracle exactly alike in all three places. This case seems to me, without being of any intrinsic importance, to afford a good example of Shelley's un-minute way of work; and I think any textual critic who will take the trouble to compare the three versions, letter by letter, and point by point, will readily perceive as he goes on how little safety there can possibly be in "harmonizing" or "systematizing" the text of Shelley's poems.—H. B. F.]

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EPIPSYCHIDION

Price, 2*s*.

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[Mrs. Shelley classes *Epipsychidion* among the poems written in 1821: in a letter to Leigh Hunt dated the 29th of December, 1820, of which a portion is published in Hunt's *Correspondence* (Vol. I, p. 160), she seems to refer to it as being already written; but only seems, for the context of the letter, which is extant, shews that there is no reference to Shelley or *Epipsychidion* in the passage wherein those names were inserted by Thornton Hunt. Whatever be the date of completion, the poem was sent to Mr. Ollier, to be published, in a letter dated the 16th of February, 1821, printed in the *Shelley Memorials* (pp. 152-3), in which Shelley says, "The longer poem, I desire, should not be considered as my own; indeed, in a certain sense, it is the production of a portion of me already dead; and in this sense the advertisement is no fiction. It is to be published simply for the esoteric few; and I make its author a secret, to avoid the malignity of those who turn sweet food into poison; transforming all they touch into the corruption of their own natures. My wish with respect to it is that it should be printed immediately in the simplest form, and merely one hundred copies: those who are capable of judging and feeling rightly with respect to a composition of so abstruse a nature, certainly do not arrive at that number—among those, at least, who would ever be excited to read an obscure and anonymous production; and it would give me no pleasure that the vulgar should read it. If you have any bookselling reason against publishing so small a number as a hundred, merely distribute copies among those to whom you think the poetry would afford any pleasure." It was printed as an octavo pamphlet, sewed, without wrapper, consisting of fly-title *Epipsychidion—Price*, 2*s*., title-page (as opposite), 1 page of preface called "Advertisement" with stanza from Dante at back, and text pp. 7 to 31. There is an imprint at the back of the fly-title, as follows:—"London. Printed by S. and R. Bentley Dorset-Street, Salisbury-Square." The name of the lady, omitted from the title-page, was Viviani,—the convent that of St. Anne, Pisa. I have not been able to ascertain that there is in existence any finished MS. of *Epipsychidion*.—H. B. F.]

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EPIPSYCHIDION

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE

AND UNFORTUNATE LADY

EMILIA V——

NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF ——

L'anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nel infinito un Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso baratro. HER OWN WORDS.

LONDON

C AND J OLLIER VERE STREET BOND STREET

MDCCCXXI.

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My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain;
Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring
Thee to base company, (as chance may do)
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,
My last delight! tell them that they are dull,
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

[BY SHELLEY.]

THE WRITER of the following Lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the Vita Nuova of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it relates; and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats. Not but that, *gran vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto veste di figura, o di colore rettorico: e domandato non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotal veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento.*[1]

The present poem appears to have been intended by the Writer as the dedication to some longer one. The stanza on the opposite[2] page is almost a literal translation from

[1] Mr. Rossetti translates this quotation from Dante thus: "Great were his shame who should rhyme anything under a garb of metaphor or rhetorical colour, and then, being asked, should be incapable of stripping his words of this garb so that they might have a veritable meaning." No doubt Shelley could have expounded the meaning of every line in this most wondrous poem, the main charge against which is that there are some few personal allusions that it is impossible to expound with certainty in his absence.

[2] From the word *opposite* being employed here in Shelley's edition, it may be fairly assumed that, although the

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Dante's famous Canzone

Voi, ch' intendendo, il terzo ciel movete, &c.

The presumptuous application of the concluding lines to his own composition will raise a smile at the expense of my unfortunate friend: be it a smile not of contempt, but pity.[1]

S.

stanza was printed on the back of the "advertisement," he meant it to be on the back of the title-page; and I accordingly give it there,—as indeed, Mrs. Shelley, in her first edition of 1839, gave it at the back of a fly-title, and facing the "advertisement." In her second edition of 1839 it preceded the "advertisement," on the same page; and the wording was curiously changed to *on the above page*. Mr. Rossetti also prints the stanza above the "advertisement," on the same page, but has made a still more curious variation of Shelley's text by reading *on the preceding page*, instead of *on the opposite page*.

[1] Writing to Mr. John Gisborne from Pisa on the 22nd of October, 1821, Shelley said (*Essays, &c.*, Vol. II, pp. 333-4), "The Epipsychidion is a mystery; as to real flesh and blood, you know I do not deal in those articles; you might as well go to a gin shop for a leg of mutton, as expect anything human or earthly from me. I desired Ollier not to circulate this piece except to the *συνετοί*, and even they, it seems, are inclined to approximate me to the circle of a servant girl and her sweetheart. But I intend to write a symposium of my own to set all this right."

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EPIPSYCHIDION[1]

SWEET Spirit! Sister of that orphan one,
Whose empire is the name thou weepest on,[2]
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee
These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow cage,
Pourest such music, that it might assuage
The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,
Were they not deaf to all sweet melody;
This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale
Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale!
But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,
And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

[1] The meaning of this title has been much discussed. Without pretending to any classical authority, I may note that I cannot discern any signification beyond the simple one, "a little poem about the soul."

[2] There ought to be no need of explanation here; but Mr. Rossetti says "the couplet has often been cited as unintelligible," — owing, probably, to that fruitful source of mystification and corruption, the foot-note wherein Professor Craik (*English Literature and Language*, Vol. II, pp. 498—500) lays down, among other absurdities, that "it is difficult not to suspect something wrong" in this "strange commencement," as he calls it. There can be no reasonable doubt that Mr. Garnett's explanation (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 97) is right: "The orphan one, Emilia's spiritual sister, is Mary Shelley, whose mother died, in giving her birth; the name is Shelley's own." When Mr. Rossetti's edition was reviewed in *The Times*, occasion was given to Mr. Garnett to address to the editor of that Journal a disclaimer as to a motive which the reviewer ascribed to this very simple explanation. Mr. Garnett's letter settles the question, if it was not settled before: he says—"I proposed, or rather stated, my interpretation simply because I knew it to be right. Its correctness is shown by the circumstance that Emilia Viviani and Mrs. Shelley were accustomed to address each other as 'sisters.' Many letters from the former to the latter are preserved, in all of which Mrs. Shelley is addressed as 'Cara Sorella.'"

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High, spirit-wingèd Heart! who dost for ever
Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,
Till[1] those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed
It over-soared this low and worldly shade,
Lie shattered; and thy panting, wounded breast
Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!
I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be,
Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee.

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human,
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman
All that is insupportable in thee
Of light, and love, and immortality!
Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse!
Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe!
Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou living Form
Among the Dead! Thou Star above the Storm!
Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror!
Thou Harmony of Nature's art! Thou Mirror
In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,
All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on!
Aye,[2] even the dim words which obscure thee now
Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow;
I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song
All of its much mortality and wrong,
With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew
From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,
Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy:
Then smile on it, so that it may not die.

I never thought before my death to see
Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,
I love thee; though the world by no thin name

[1] In Shelley's edition, '*Till*.
[2] In Shelley's edition, *Ay*; but he habitually spelt the word with a final *e*.

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Will hide that love, from its unvalued shame.
Would we two had been twins of the same mother!
Or, that the name my heart lent to another
Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,
Blending two beams of one eternity!
Yet were one lawful and the other true,
These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due,
How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!
I am not thine: I am a part of *thee.*

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burnt its wings;
Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,
Young Love should teach Time, in his own grey style,
All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,
A lovely soul formed to be blest and bless?
A well of sealed and secret happiness,
Whose waters like blithe light and music are,
Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A Star
Which moves not in the moving Heavens, alone?
A smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone
Amid rude voices? a belovèd light?
A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?
A Lute, which those whom love has taught to play
Make music on, to soothe the roughest day
And lull fond grief asleep? a buried treasure?
A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure?
A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I measure
The world of fancies, seeking one like thee,
And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,
And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day,
Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,
Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,
In the suspended impulse of its lightness,

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Were less ætherially[1] light: the brightness
Of her divinest presence trembles through
Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew
Embodied in the windless Heaven of June
Amid the splendour-wingèd stars, the Moon
Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:
And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full
Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,
Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops
Of planetary music heard in trance.
In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
The sun-beams of those wells which ever leap
Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep
For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense.
The glory of her being, issuing thence,
Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade
Of unentangled intermixture, made
By Love, of light and motion: one intense
Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,
Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing
Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing
With the unintermitted blood, which there
Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air
The crimson pulse of living morning quiver,)[2]
Continuously prolonged, and ending never,
Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled
Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world;
Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.

[1] In Shelley's edition, *ethereally*.

[2] So in Shelley's and all editions up to Mr. Rossetti's, wherein the line is changed to—

The crimson pulse of living Morn may quiver,

and it is suggested in a note that the words *morn may* "might easily be misread and misprinted as" *morning*. No doubt they might: yet I incline to the supposition that the line stands in the first edition as Shelley meant it to stand, and that this is another case in which he uses the subjunctive mood after a word which is not generally followed by that mood. See my note on *when the moon. . . pause*, in *Laon and Cythna* (Vol. I, p. 224). Notwithstanding the "horrid violation of grammar," as Mr. Rossetti calls it, the magic of Shelley's euphony seems to me here, as in that case, to vanish with his editor's rectification. My brother, Alfred Forman, suggests that Shelley used *pulse* here as a plural, with a poetic instinct that, if that was not the plural, it ought to be.

Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress,
And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress
The air of her own speed has disentwined,
The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind;
And in the soul a wild odour is felt,
Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt
Into the bosom of a frozen bud.——
See where she stands! a mortal shape indued
With love and life and light and deity,
And motion which may change but cannot die;
An image of some bright Eternity;
A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendour
Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender
Reflection of[1] the eternal Moon of Love
Under whose motions life's dull billows move;
A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning;
A Vision like incarnate April, warning,
With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
Into his summer grave.

Ah, woe is me!
What have I dared? where am I lifted? how
Shall I descend, and perish not? I know
That Love makes all things equal: I have heard
By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:
The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate
Whose course has been so starless! O too late
Belovèd! O too soon adored, by me!
For in the fields of immortality
My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,
A divine presence in a place divine;

[1] In Mrs. Shelley's editions we read *on* for *of*. Mr. Rossetti reverts to the reading of Shelley's edition, *of*, which is of course right.

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Or should have moved beside it on this earth,
A shadow of that substance, from its birth;
But not as now:---I love thee; yes, I feel
That on the fountain of my heart a seal
Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright
For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast delight.
We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,[1]
For one another, though dissimilar;
Such difference without discord, as can make
Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake
As trembling leaves in a continuous air?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare
Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wreckt.
I never was attached to that great sect,
Whose doctrine is, that each one should select
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion, though it is in[2] the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,
Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world, and so
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

[1] This line is so printed in all editions known to me. Mr. Rossetti says—"It seems to me almost a certainty that the opening 'We' in this line ought to be cancelled." The irregularity strikes me, on the contrary, as peculiarly beautiful and characteristic.

[2] The word *in* is in Shelley's edition and in those of Mrs. Shelley and Mr. Rossetti. Professor Craik wanted it cut out (*English Literature and Language*, Vol. II, p. 499), and cited in support of his view the fragment at page 319 of the second edition of 1839, wherein the line is printed without the word *in*, correctly as he says; but its incorrectness was finally demonstrated when Mr. Garnett, having access to the same MS. books from which Mrs. Shelley got the fragment, printed the line with the word *in* (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 34). Mr. Garnett gives the words *though 'tis in the code*; but whether the abbreviation of *it* is his or Shelley's I have been unable to ascertain. It seems to me that Professor Craik's proposal had no claim whatever to be entertained: the doctrine referred to is not *the code of modern morals*, but only a part of it, and therefore *in the code*.

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True Love in this differs from gold and clay,
That to divide is not to take away.
Love is like understanding, that grows bright,
Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,
Imagination! which from earth and sky,
And from the depths of human phantasy,
As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills
The Universe with glorious beams, and kills
Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow
Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow
The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
The life that wears, the spirit that creates
One object, and one form, and builds thereby
A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this:
Evil from good; misery from happiness;
The baser from the nobler; the impure
And frail, from what is clear and must endure.
If you divide suffering and dross, you may
Diminish till it is consumed away;
If you divide pleasure and love and thought,
Each part exceeds the whole; and we know not
How much, while any yet remains unshared,
Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared:
This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw
The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law
By which those live, to whom this world of life
Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife
Tills for the promise of a later birth
The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft
Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,

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In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,
Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves
Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves
Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor
Paved her light steps;—on an imagined shore,
Under the grey beak of some promontory
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,
That I beheld her not. In solitudes
Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,
And from the fountains, and the odours deep
Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep
Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,
Breathed but of *her* to the enamoured air;
And from the breezes whether low or loud,
And from the rain of every passing cloud,
And from the singing of the summer-birds,
And from all sounds, all silence. In the words
Of antique verse and high romance,—in form,[1]
Sound, colour—in whatever checks that Storm
Which with the shattered present chokes the past;
And in that best philosophy, whose taste
Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom
As glorious as a fiery martyrdom;
Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth
I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,
And towards the loadstar of my one desire,
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,
When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere
A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,
As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—

[1] This comma is wanting in Shelley's edition.

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But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame,
Past, like a God throned on a wingèd planet,
Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,
Into the dreary cone of our life's shade;
And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,
I would have followed, though the grave between
Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen:
When a voice said:—"O Thou of hearts the weakest,
"The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest."
Then I—"where?" the world's echo answered "where!"
And in that silence, and in my despair,
I questioned every tongueless wind that flew
Over my tower of mourning, if it knew
Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul;
And murmured names and spells which have controul
Over the sightless tyrants of our fate;
But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate
The night which closed on her; nor uncreate
That world within this Chaos, mine and me,
Of which she was the veiled Divinity,
The world I say of thoughts that worshipped her:
And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear
And every gentle passion sick to death,
Feeding my course with expectation's breath,
Into the wintry forest of our life;
And struggling through its error with vain strife,
And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,
And half bewildered by new forms, I past
Seeking among those untaught foresters
If I could find one form resembling hers,
In which she might have masked herself from me.
There,—One, whose voice was venomed melody
Sate by a well, under blue night-shade bowers;
The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,
Her touch was as electric poison,—flame

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Out of her looks into my vitals came,
And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew
Into the core of my green heart, and lay
Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown grey
O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime
With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought
The shadow of that idol of my thought.
And some were fair—but beauty dies away:
Others were wise—but honeyed words betray:
And One was true—oh! why not true to me?
Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,
I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,
Wounded and weak and panting; the cold day
Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain.
When, like a noon-day dawn, there shone again
Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed
As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed,
As is the Moon, whose changes ever run
Into themselves, to the eternal Sun;
The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,
Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles,[1]
That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame
Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,
And warms not but illumines. Young and fair
As the descended Spirit of that sphere,
She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night
From its own darkness, until all was bright
Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind,
And, as a cloud charioted by the wind,
She led me to a cave in that wild place,

[1] In Shelley's edition this line ends with a full-stop, doubtless a misprint.

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And sate beside me, with her downward face
Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon
Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.
And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,
And all my being became bright or dim
As the Moon's image in a summer sea,
According as she smiled or frowned on me;
And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed:
Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead:—
For at her silver voice came Death and Life,
Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,
Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,
The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,
And through the cavern without wings they flew,
And cried "Away, he is not of our crew."
I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,
Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips
Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse;—
And how my soul was as a lampless sea,
And who was then its Tempest; and when She,
The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost
Crept o'er those waters, till[1] from coast to coast
The moving billows of my being fell
Into a death of ice, immovable[2];—
And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,
The white Moon smiling all the while on it,
These words conceal:—If not, each word would be
The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me!

At length, into the obscure Forest came
The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.
Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns

[1] In Shelley's edition, *'till.*

[2] In Shelley's edition, *immoveable.*

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Flashed from her motion splendour like the Morn's,
And from her presence life was radiated
Through the grey earth and branches bare and dead;
So that her way was paved, and roofed above
With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love;
And music from her respiration spread
Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated
By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,
So that the savage winds hung mute around;
And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair
Dissolving the dull cold in the frore[1] air:
Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,
When light is changed to love, this glorious One
Floated into the cavern where I lay,
And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay
Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below
As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow
I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night
Was penetrating me with living light:
I knew it was the Vision veiled from me
So many years—that it was Emily,

Twin[2] Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,
This world of love, this *me;* and into birth
Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart
Magnetic might into its central heart;
And lift its billows and its mists, and guide
By everlasting laws, each wind and tide
To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave;
And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave
Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers
The armies of the rain-bow-wingèd showers;

[1] In Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions we read *froze*; but this is an obvious printer's blunder.

[2] So in Shelley's edition; but *thin* in Mrs. Shelley's.

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And, as those married lights, which from the towers
Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe
In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe;
And all their many-mingled influence blend,
If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end;—
So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway
Govern my sphere of being, night and day!
Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might;
Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light;
And, through the shadow of the seasons three,
From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,
Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.
Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,
Who drew[1] the heart of this frail Universe
Towards thine own; till, wreckt in that convulsion,
Alternating attraction and repulsion,
Thine went astray and that was rent in twain;
Oh, float into our azure heaven again!
Be there love's folding-star at thy return;
The living Sun will feed thee from its urn
Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her horn
In thy last smiles; adoring Even and Morn
Will worship thee with incense of calm breath
And lights and shadows; as the star of Death
And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild
Called Hope and Fear—upon the heart are piled
Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine
A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine,
Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth
Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth
Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,
Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

[1] Mr. Rossetti reads *drew'st* for *drew*.

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The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.
To whatsoe'er of dull mortality
Is mine, remain a vestal sister still;
To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,
Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united
Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.
The hour is come:---the destined Star has risen
Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set
The sentinels---but true love never yet
Was thus constrained: it overleaps all fence:
Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath,
Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,
Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
Of arms: more strength has Love than he or they;
For it[1] can burst his charnel, and make free
The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,
A ship is floating in the harbour now,
A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow;
There is a path on the sea's azure floor,
No keel has ever ploughed that path before;
The halcyons brood around the foamless isles;
The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles;
The merry mariners are bold and free:
Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me?
Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest

[1] In Shelley's edition, *it*: in Mrs. Shelley's, *he*. Mr. Rossetti, following this latter reading, made a further change by printing *his* in Italics. I think *it* is clearly right; for Love is called *it* at the opening of the passage (line 398); and the sense intended seems to me to be that Love can burst Death's charnel, not its own charnel.

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Is a far Eden of the purple East;
And we between her wings will sit, while Night
And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,
Our ministers, along the boundless Sea,
Treading each other's heels, unheededly.
It is an isle under Ionian skies,
Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,
And, for the harbours are not safe and good,
This land would have remained a solitude
But for some pastoral people native there,
Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air
Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,
Simple and spirited; innocent and bold.
The blue Ægean girds[1] this chosen home,
With ever-changing sound and light and foam,
Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar;
And all the winds wandering along the shore
Undulate with the undulating tide:
There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide;
And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
As clear as elemental diamond,
Or serene morning air; and far beyond,
The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer
(Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year,)
Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls
Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls
Illumining, with sound that never fails
Accompany the noon-day nightingales;
And all the place is peopled with sweet airs;
The light clear element which the isle wears
Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers

[1] In Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839, *girls* was printed for *girds*; but *girds* was restored in the second edition of the same year.

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And falls upon the eye-lids like faint sleep;
And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,
And dart their arrowy odour through the brain
Till[1] you might faint with that delicious pain.
And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,
With that deep music is in unison:
Which is a soul within the soul---they seem
Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—
It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,
Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;
Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,
Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air.
It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,
Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light
Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they
Sail onward far upon their fatal way:
The wingèd storms, chaunting their thunder-psalm
To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,
From which its fields and woods ever renew
Their green and golden immortality.
And from the sea there rise, and from the sky
There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,
Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,
Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,
Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride
Glowing at once with love and loveliness,
Blushes and trembles at its own excess;
Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile
Unfolds itself, and may be felt,[2] not seen
O'er the grey rocks, blue waves, and forests green,
Filling their bare and void interstices.—

[1] In Shelley's edition, '*Till*. [2] This comma is wanting in Shelley's edition.

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But the chief marvel of the wilderness
Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
None of the rustic island-people know:
'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height
It overtops the woods; but, for delight,
Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime
Had been invented, in the world's young prime,
Reared it, a wonder of that simple time,
An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,
But, as it were Titanic; in the heart
Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown
Out of the mountains, from the living stone,
Lifting itself in caverns light and high:
For all the antique and learnèd imagery
Has been erased, and in the place of it
The ivy and the wild-vine interknit
The volumes of their many twining[1] stems;
Parasite flowers illume with dewy gems
The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky
Peeps through their winter-woof[2] of tracery
With Moon-light patches, or star atoms keen,
Or fragments of the day's intense serene;—
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers
And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
To sleep in one another's arms, and dream

[1] These are two words in Shelley's edition; but in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839 we read *many-twining*, as also in Mr. Rossetti's. It is a likely enough compound word for Shelley to use; but the original reading is so perfectly safe and sound, that there can be but little excuse for, or safety in, emendation.

[2] Mr. Rossetti has suggested that Shelley wrote "*inter*-woof." I am satisfied that *winter-woof* is right, and has reference to the distinction between the *tracery* of bare stems seen against the sky in winter and the *massing* of the foliage in flower-time.

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Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we
Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed
Thee to be lady of the solitude.---
And I have fitted up some chambers there
Looking towards the golden Eastern air,
And level with the living winds, which flow
Like waves above the living waves below.---
I have sent books and music there, and all
Those instruments with which high spirits call
The future from its cradle, and the past
Out of its grave, and make the present last
In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,
Folded within their own eternity.
Our simple life wants little, and true taste
Hires not the pale drudge Luxury, to waste
The scene it would adorn, and therefore still,
Nature with all her children, haunts the hill.
The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet
Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit
Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance
Between the quick bats in their twilight dance;
The spotted deer bask in the fresh moon-light
Before our gate, and the slow, silent night
Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep.
Be this our home in life, and when years heap
Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,
Let us become the over-hanging day,
The living soul of this Elysian isle,
Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile
We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,
And wander in the meadows, or ascend

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The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend
With lightest winds, to touch their paramour;
Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,
Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,[1]---
Possessing and possest by all that is
Within that calm circumference of bliss,
And by each other, till to love and live
Be one: --- or, at the noontide hour, arrive
Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep
The moonlight of the expired night asleep,
Through which the awakened day can never peep;
A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,
Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights;
Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain
Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.
And we will talk, until thought's melody
Become too sweet for utterance, and it die
In words, to live again in looks, which dart
With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,
Harmonizing silence without a sound.
Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound,
And our veins beat together; and our lips
With other eloquence than words, eclipse
The soul that burns between them, and the wells
Which boil under our being's inmost cells,
The fountains of our deepest life, shall be
Confused in passion's golden purity,
As mountain-springs under the morning Sun.
We shall become the same, we shall be one
Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?
One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,

[1] In Shelley's edition, *ecstacy*, though the word is correctly spelt in line 39, p. 370.

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Till[1] like two meteors of expanding flame,
Those spheres instinct with it become the same,
Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still
Burning, yet ever inconsumable:
In one another's substance finding food,
Like flames too pure and light and unimbued
To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,
Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away:
One hope within two wills, one will beneath
Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,
One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
And one annihilation. Woe is me!
The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce
Into the height of love's rare Universe,
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.---
I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,
And say:—"We are the masters of thy slave;
"What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine?"
Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave,
All singing loud: "Love's very pain is sweet,
"But its reward is in the world divine
"Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave."
So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste
Over the hearts of men, until ye meet
Marina, Vanna, Primus,[2] and the rest,
And bid them love each other and be blest:
And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,
And come and be my guest, --- for I am Love's.

[1] In Shelley's edition, '*Till*.

[2] Marina is a pet-name of Mrs. Shelley's: Vanna is the diminutive of Giovanna (Joan or Jane), and might, as Mr. Rossetti hints, refer to Mrs. Williams, to whom Shelley had been introduced shortly before sending off *Epipsychidion* to Mr. Ollier. I have seen no explanation offered as to Primus, and know of none.

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STUDIES FOR EPIPSYCHIDION, AND CANCELLED PASSAGES.[1]

Here, my dear friend, is a new book for you;
I have already dedicated two
To other friends, one female and one male,—
What you are, is a thing that I must veil;
What can this be to those who praise or rail?
I never was attached to that great sect
Whose doctrine is that each one should select
Out of the world a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion—though 'tis in the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread
Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world—and so
With one sad friend, and many a jealous foe,
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

Free love has this, different from gold and clay,
That to divide is not to take away.
Like ocean, which the general north wind breaks

[1] Under the general title of "Fragments," Mrs. Shelley added, in her second edition of 1839, several exquisite "gleanings from Shelley's manuscript books and papers," the first of which, headed "To——," consisted of lines 1 to 37 and 62 to 91 of the ensuing group of Studies, &c. The rest were disentangled from the same sources by Mr. Garnett; and he printed the whole of them in his *Relics of Shelley*,—lines 1 to 141 under the very appropriate title *To His Genius* (pp. 34 to 39), dated 1820, and lines 142 to 174 as four cancelled passages of *Epipsychidion*, all dated 1821, and being Nos. XXXII to XXXV of the "Miscellaneous Fragments" (pp. 86 and 87). It seems convenient to number the whole consecutively in this edition, as an addendum to *Epipsychidion*. The portions dated 1820 (lines 1 to 141) are obviously approaches to that most glorious poem,—metre and method being alike identical in these and that, and indeed whole passages being also

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Into ten thousand waves, and each one makes
A mirror of the moon—like some great glass,
Which did distort whatever form might pass,
Dashed into fragments by a playful child,
Which then reflects its eyes and forehead mild;
Giving for one, which it could ne'er express,
A thousand images of loveliness.

If I were one whom the loud world held wise,
I should disdain to quote authorities
In commendation[1] of this kind of love:—
Why there is first the God in heaven above,
Who wrote a book called Nature, 'tis to be
Reviewed, I hear, in the next Quarterly;
And Socrates, the Jesus Christ of Greece,
And Jesus Christ himself did never cease
To urge all living things to love each other,
And to forgive their mutual faults, and smother
The Devil of disunion in their souls.

* * * * *

I love you!—Listen, O embodied Ray
Of the great Brightness; I must pass away
While you remain, and these light words must be
Tokens by which you may remember me.
Start not—the thing you are is unbetrayed,
If you are human, and if but the shade

identical; but there is a tone of gentle sarcasm which, appearing in these approaches, had wholly worked off in the progress of the poet's mind towards the fervent and most earnest raptures of the ultimate poem. The fragment *Fiordispina*, doubtless, may also be regarded as a "preliminary though unconscious" study for *Epipsychidion*, as Mr. Garnett says, at p. 29 of *Relics of Shelley*; but that fragment, and *Ginevra*, which also has some reference to Emilia Viviani, are different in method from these, and would not follow so appropriately here as in their place in the general distribution of posthumous poems.

[1] So in *Relics of Shelley*; but in Mrs. Shelley's edition we read *In the support of* &c.

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Of some sublimer spirit.

* * * * *

And as to friend or mistress, 'tis a form;
Perhaps I wish you were one. Some declare
You a familiar spirit, as you are;
Others with a more inhuman
Hint that, though not my wife, you are a woman,
What is the colour of your eyes and hair?
Why, if you were a lady, it were fair
The world should know—but, as I am afraid,
The Quarterly would bait you if betrayed;
And if, as it will be sport to see them stumble
Over all sorts of scandals, hear them mumble
Their litany of curses—some guess right,
And others swear you're a Hermaphrodite;
Like that sweet marble monster of both sexes,
With looks so sweet and gentle that it vexes
The very soul that the soul is gone
Which lifted from her limbs the veil of stone.

* * * * *

It is a sweet thing, friendship, a dear balm,
A happy and auspicious bird of calm,
Which rides o'er life's ever tumultuous Ocean;
A God that broods o'er chaos in commotion;
A flower which fresh as Lapland roses are,
Lifts its bold head into the world's frore[1] air,
And blooms most radiantly when others die,
Health, hope, and youth, and brief prosperity;
And with the light and odour of its bloom,
Shining within the dungeon and the tomb;
Whose coming is as light and music are

[1] In *Relics of Shelley*, the word here is *pure*. Mr. Rossetti's emendation *frore* is absolutely certain; and he states that Mr. Garnett concurs in it.

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'Mid dissonance and gloom—a star
Which moves not 'mid the moving heavens alone—
A smile among dark frowns—a gentle tone
Among rude voices, a belovèd light,
A solitude, a refuge, a delight.
If I had but a friend! Why, I have three
Even by my own confession; there may be
Some more, for what I know, for 'tis my mind
To call my friends all who are wise and kind,—
And these, Heaven knows, at best are very few;
But none can ever be more dear than you.
Why should they be? My muse has lost her wings,
Or like a dying swan who soars and sings,
I should describe you in heroic style,
But as it is, are you not void of guile?
A lovely soul, formed to be blest and bless:
A well of sealed and secret happiness;
A lute which those whom Love has taught to play
Make music on to cheer the roughest day,
And enchant sadness till it sleeps?

* * * * *

To the oblivion whither I and thou,
All loving and all lovely, hasten now
With steps, ah, too unequal! may we meet
In one Elysium or one winding sheet!

If any should be curious to discover
Whether to you I am a friend or lover,
Let them read Shakspeare's sonnets, taking thence
A whetstone for their dull intelligence
That tears and will not cut, or let them guess
How Diotima, the wise prophetess,
Instructed the instructor, and why he

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Rebuked the infant spirit of melody
On Agathon's sweet lips, which as he spoke
Was as the lovely star when morn has broke
The roof of darkness, in the golden dawn,
Half-hidden, and yet beautiful.

I'll pawn
My hopes of Heaven—you know what they are worth—
That the presumptuous pedagogues of Earth,
If they could tell the riddle offered here
Would scorn to be, or being to appear
What now they seem and are—but let them chide,
They have few pleasures in the world beside;
Perhaps we should be dull were we not chidden,
Paradise fruits are sweetest when forbidden.
Folly can season Wisdom, Hatred Love.

* * * * *

Farewell, if it can be to say farewell
To those who—

* * * * *

I will not, as most dedicators do,
Assure myself and all the world and you,
That you are faultless—would to God they were
Who taunt me with your love! I then should wear
These heavy chains of life with a light spirit,
And would to God I were, or even as near it
As you, dear heart. Alas! what are we? Clouds
Driven by the wind in warring multitudes,
Which rain into the bosom of the earth,
And rise again, and in our death and birth,
And through our restless life, take as from heaven
Hues which are not our own, but which are given,

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And then withdrawn, and with inconstant glance
Flash from the spirit to the countenance.
There is a Power, a Love, a Joy, a God
Which makes in mortal hearts its brief abode,
A Pythian exhalation, which inspires
Love, only love—a wind which o'er the wires
Of the soul's giant harp—
There is a mood which language faints beneath;
You feel it striding, as Almighty Death
His bloodless steed.

* * * * *

And what is that most brief and bright delight
Which rushes through the touch and through the sight,
And stands before the spirit's inmost throne,
A naked Seraph? None hath ever known.
Its birth is darkness, and its growth desire;
Untameable and fleet and fierce as fire,
Not to be touched but to be felt alone,
It fills the world with glory—and is gone.

* * * * *

It floats with rainbow pinions o'er the stream
Of life, which flows, like a dream
Into the light of morning, to the grave
As to an ocean.

* * * * *

What is that joy which serene infancy
Perceives not, as the hours content them by,[1]
Each in a chain of blossoms, yet enjoys

[1] Mr. Garnett sets the word *sic* against this line, as if he regarded it with suspicion; but I do not doubt its being as Shelley meant it. I take the expression "as the hours content them by" to mean "as the hours content themselves along,"—the curious reflective verb *content them by* being used as an equivalent for *pass by contentedly*.

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The shapes of this new world, in giant toys
Wrought by the busy ever new?
Remembrance borrows Fancy's glass, to show
These forms more sincere
Than now they are, than then, perhaps, they were.
When everything familiar seemed to be
Wonderful, and the immortality
Of this great world, which all things must inherit,
Was felt as one with the awakening spirit,
Unconscious of itself, and of the strange
Distinctions which in its proceeding change
It feels and knows, and mourns as if each were
A desolation.

* * * * *

Were it not a sweet refuge, Emily,
For all those exiles from the dull insane
Who vex this pleasant world with pride and pain,
For all that band of sister-spirits known
To one another by a voiceless tone?

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APPENDIX TO VOL. II.

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APPENDIX.

I.

Relation of the Death of the Family of the Cenci.[1]

The most wicked life which the Roman nobleman, Francesco Cenci, led while he lived in this world, not only occasioned his own ruin and death, but also that of many others, and brought down the entire destruction of his house. This nobleman was the son of Monsignore Cenci, who, having been treasurer during the pontificate of Pius V., left immense wealth to Francesco, his only son. From this inheritance alone he enjoyed an income of 160,000 crowns, and he increased his fortune by marrying an exceedingly rich lady, who died after she had given birth to seven unfortunate children. He then contracted a second marriage with Lucretia Petroni, a lady of a noble Roman family; but he had no children by her. Sodomy was the least, and atheism the greatest, of the vices of Francesco; as is proved by the tenor of his life; for he was three times accused of

[1] In a most interesting letter to Peacock, dated "*Livorno*, July 1819" (*Essays &c.*, Vol. II, pp. 217 to 220), Shelley gives an account of *The Cenci*, begs his friend to get it acted at Covent Garden, and says: "I send you a translation of the Italian manuscript on which my play is founded, the chief subject of which I have touched very delicately... The translation which I send you, is to be prefixed to the play, together with a print of Beatrice." The omission of this literal version of the story from the two editions of *The Cenci* published during Shelley's life may perhaps have arisen from the consideration that, to the public of that day, the bare horrors of the story might, if given, negative that very delicacy and reticence to which Shelley refers. In the same letter to Peacock, it is stated that the narrative then existed only in manuscript.

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sodomy, and paid the sum of 100,000 crowns to government, in commutation of the punishment rightfully awarded to this crime: and concerning his religion, it is sufficient to state, that he never frequented any church; and although he caused a small chapel, dedicated to the apostle St. Thomas, to be built in the court of his palace, his intention in so doing was to bury there all his children, whom he cruelly hated. He had driven the eldest of these, Giacomo, Cristofero, and Rocco, from the paternal mansion, while they were yet too young to have given him any real cause of displeasure. He sent them to the university of Salamanca, but, refusing to remit to them there the money necessary for their maintenance, they desperately returned home. They found that this change only increased their misery, for the hatred and contempt of their father towards them was so aggravated, that he refused to dress or maintain them, so that they were obliged to have recourse to the Pope, who caused Cenci to make them a fit allowance, with which they withdrew from his house.

The third imprisonment of Francesco for his accustomed crime of sodomy, occurred at this time, and his sons took occasion to supplicate the Pope to punish their father, and to remove so great a monster from his family. The Pope, though before inclined to condemn Francesco to the deserved punishment of death, would not do it at the request of his sons, but permitted him again to compound with the law, by paying the accustomed penalty of 100,000 crowns. The hatred of Francesco towards his sons was augmented by this proceeding on their parts; he cursed them; and often also struck and ill-treated his daughters. The eldest of these, being unable any longer to support the cruelty of her father, exposed her miserable condition to the Pope, and supplicated him either to marry her, according to his choice, or to shut her up in a monastery, that by any

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means she might be liberated from the cruel oppression of her parent. Her prayer was heard, and the Pope, in pity to her unhappiness, bestowed her in marriage to Signore Carlo Gabrielli, one of the first gentlemen of the city of Gabbio, and obliged Francesco to give her a fitting dowry of some thousand crowns.

Francesco fearing that his youngest daughter would, when she grew up, follow the example of her sister, bethought himself how to hinder this design, and for that purpose shut her up alone in an apartment of the palace, where he himself brought her food, so that no one might approach her; and imprisoned her in this manner for several months, often inflicting on her blows with a stick.

In the meantime ensued the death of two of his sons, Rocco and Cristofero—one being assassinated by a surgeon, and the other by Paolo Corso, while he was attending mass. The inhuman father showed every sign of joy on hearing this news, saying that nothing would exceed his pleasure if all his children died, and that when the grave should receive the last he would, as a demonstration of joy, make a bonfire of all that he possessed. And on the present occasion, as a further sign of his hatred, he refused to pay the smallest sum towards the funeral expenses of his murdered sons. Francesco carried his wicked debauchery to such an excess, that he caused girls (of whom he constantly kept a number in his house), and also common courtezans, to sleep in the bed of his wife, and often endeavoured, by force and threats, to debauch his daughter Beatrice, who was now grown up, and exceedingly beautiful. He gave her more liberty in his palace, and was not ashamed to seek her naked in her bed, shewing himself thus with his courtezans, and making her witness of all that could pass between them and him. He tried to persuade the poor girl, by an enormous heresy,

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that children born of the commerce of a father with his daughter were all saints, and that the saints who obtained the highest places in Paradise had been thus born. Beatrice's resistance of his infamous desires was punished by blows and ill treatment.

Beatrice, finding it impossible to continue to live in so miserable a manner, followed the example of her sister; she sent a well-written supplication to the Pope, imploring him to exercise his authority in withdrawing her from the violence and cruelty of her father.—But this petition, which might, if listened to, have saved this unfortunate girl from an early death, produced not the least effect. It was afterwards found among the collection of memorials, and it is pretended that it never came before the Pope.

Francesco, having discovered this attempt on the part of his daughter, became more enraged, and redoubled his tyranny; confining with rigour not only Beatrice, but also his wife. At length, these unhappy women, finding themselves, without hope of relief, driven by desperation, resolved to plan his death.

The Palace Cenci was sometimes visited by a Monsignore Guerra—a young man of handsome person and attractive manners, and of that facile character which might easily be induced to become a partner in any action, good or evil, as it might happen. His countenance was pleasing, and his person tall and well proportioned; he was somewhat in love with Beatrice, and well acquainted with the turpitude of Francesco's character, and was hated by him on account of the familiar intercourse which subsisted between him and the children of this unnatural father: for this reason he timed his visits with caution, and never came to the house but when he knew that Francesco was absent. He was moved to a lively compassion of the state of Lucretia and Beatrice, who often related their increasing misery to

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him, and his pity was for ever fed and augmented by some new tale of tyranny and cruelty. In one of these conversations Beatrice let fall some words which plainly indicated that she and her mother-in-law contemplated the murder of their tyrant, and Monsignore Guerra not only showed approbation of their design, but also promised to co-operate with them in their undertaking. Thus stimulated, Beatrice communicated the design to her eldest brother, Giacomo, without whose concurrence it was impossible that they should succeed. This latter was easily drawn into consent, since he was utterly disgusted with his father, who ill-treated him, and refused to allow him a sufficient support for his wife and children.

The apartments of Monsignore Guerra was the place in which the circumstances of the crime about to be committed were concerted and determined on. Here Giacomo, with the understanding of his sister and mother-in-law, held various consultations, and finally resolved to commit the murder of Francesco to two of his vassals, who had become his inveterate enemies; one called Marzio, and the other Olympio: the latter, by means of Francesco, had been deprived of his post as castellan of the Rock of Petrella.

It was already well known that Francesco, with the permission of Signore Marzio di Colonna, baron of that feud, had resolved to retire to Petrella, and to pass the summer there with his family. Some banditti of the kingdom of Naples were hired, and were instructed to lie in wait in the woods about Petrella, and, upon advice being given them of the approach of Francesco, to seize upon him. This scheme was so arranged that, although the robbers were only to seize and take off Francesco, yet that his wife and children should not be suspected of being accomplices in the act. But the affair did not succeed; for, as the banditti were not informed of his approach in

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time enough, Francesco arrived safe and sound at Petrella. They were obliged therefore to form some new scheme to obtain the end which every day made them more impatient to effect; for Francesco still persisted in his wicked conduct. He, being an old man, above seventy years of age, never quitted the castle; therefore no use could be made of the banditti, who were still secreted in the environs. It was determined, therefore, to accomplish the murder in Francesco's own house.

Marzio and Olympio were called to the castle; and Beatrice, accompanied by her mother-in-law, conversed with them from a window during the night-time, when her father slept. She ordered them to repair to Monsignore Guerra with a note, in which they were desired to murder Francesco, in consideration of a reward of a thousand crowns: a third to be given them before the act, by Monsignore Guerra, and the other two thirds, by the ladies themselves, after the deed should be accomplished. Having consented to this agreement, they were secretly admitted into the castle the 8th of September, 1598; but because this day was the anniversary of the birth of the Blessed Virgin, the Signora Lucretia, held back by her veneration for so holy a time, desired, with the consent of her daughter-in-law, that the execution of the murder should be put off until the following day. They dexterously mixed opium with the drink of Francesco, who, upon going to bed, was soon oppressed by a deep sleep. About midnight his daughter herself led the two assassins into the apartment of her father, and left them there that they might execute the deed they had undertaken, and retired to a chamber close by, where Lucretia remained also, expecting the return of the murderers, and the relation of their success. Soon after the assassins entered, and told the ladies that pity had held them back, and that they

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could not overcome their repugnance to kill in cold blood a poor sleeping old man. These words filled Beatrice with anger, and after having bitterly reviled them as cowards and traitors, she exclaimed, "Since you have not courage enough to murder a sleeping man, I will kill my father myself; but your lives shall not be long secure." The assassins, hearing this short but terrible threat, feared that if they did not commit the deed, the tempest would burst over their own heads, took courage, and re-entered the chamber where Francesco slept, and with a hammer drove a nail into his head, making it pass by his eye, and another they drove into his neck. After a few struggles the unhappy Francesco breathed his last. The murderers departed, after having received the remainder of the promised reward; besides which, Beatrice gave Marzio a mantle trimmed with gold. After this the two ladies, after drawing out the two nails, enveloped the body in a fine sheet, and carried it to an open gallery that overhung a garden, and had underneath an elder-tree: from thence they threw it down, so that it might be believed that Francesco, attending a call of nature, was traversing this gallery, when, being only supported by feeble beams, it had given way, and thus had lost his life.

And so indeed was it believed the next day, when the feigned lamentations of Lucretia and Beatrice, who appeared inconsolable, spread the news of Francesco's death. He received an honourable burial; and his family, after a short stay at the castle, returned to Rome to enjoy the fruits of their crime. They passed some time there in tranquillity; but Divine Justice, which would not allow so atrocious a wickedness to remain hid and unpunished, so ordered it, that the Court of Naples, to which the account of the death of Cenci was forwarded, began to entertain doubts concerning the mode by which he came by it, and

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sent a commissary to examine the body and to take informations. Among other things, this man discovered a circumstance to the prejudice of the family of the deceased: it appeared that the day after the event of her father's death, Beatrice had given to wash a sheet covered with blood, saying: . . .[1] These informations were instantly forwarded to the Court of Rome; but, nevertheless, several months passed without any step being taken in disfavour of the Cenci family; and, in the mean time, the youngest son of Francesco died, and two only remained of the five that he had had; namely, Giacomo and Bernardo. Monsignore Guerra, having heard of the notification made by the Court of Naples to that of Rome, fearing that Marzio and Olympio might fall into the hands of justice, and be induced to confess their crime, suddenly hired men to murder them, but succeeded only in assassinating Olympio at the city of Terni. Marzio, who had escaped this misfortune, soon incurred that of being imprisoned at Naples, where he confessed the whole; and instantly, while the arrival of Marzio at Rome from Naples was expected, Giacomo and Bernardo were arrested, and imprisoned in the Corte Savella, and Lucretia and Beatrice were confined in their own house under a good guard; but afterwards they were also conducted to the prison where were the brothers. They were here examined, and all constantly denied the crime, and particularly Beatrice, who also denied having given to Marzio the mantle trimmed with gold, of which mention was before made; and Marzio, overcome and moved by the presence of mind and courage of Beatrice, retracted all that he had deposed at Naples,

[1] The passage here omitted from the translation contains the deposition of the Petrella laundress. The curious may read it in the original Italian, in the *Mélanges publiés pour la Société des Bibliophiles Français* (Paris, 1822), to be found in the British Museum. The French version in the same volume is, in this passage, wholly original,—not a translation.

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and, rather than again confess, obstinately died under his torments.

There not being sufficient proof to justify putting the Cenci family to the torture, they were all transferred to Castello, where they remained several months in tranquillity. But, for their misfortune, one of the murderers of Olympio at Terni fell into the hands of justice; he confessed that he had been hired to this deed by Monsignore Guerra, who had also commissioned him to assassinate Marzio. Fortunately for this prelate, he received prompt information of the testimony given against him, and was able to hide himself for a time, and to plan his escape, which was very difficult; for his stature, the fairness and beauty of his countenance, and his light hair, made him conspicuous for discovery. He changed his dress for that of a charcoal-man, blackening his face, and shaving his head; and thus disguised, driving two asses before him, with some bread and onions in his hands, he passed freely through Rome, under the eyes of the ministers of justice, who sought him everywhere; and, without being recognised by any one, passed out of one of the gates of the city, where, after a short time, he was met by the sbirri, who were searching the country, and passed unknown by them, not without suffering great fear at his risk of being discovered and arrested: by means of this ingenious disguise he effected his escape to a safe country.

The flight of Monsignore Guerra, joined to the confession of the murderer of Olympio, aggravated the other proofs so much, that the Cenci were re-transferred from Castello to Corte Savella, and were condemned to be put to the torture. The two sons sank vilely under their torments, and became convicted; Lucretia, being of advanced age, having completed her fiftieth year, and being of a fat make, was not able to resist the torture of the cord, and there-

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fore told all she knew. But the Signora Beatrice, being young, lively, and strong, neither with good nor ill treatment, with menaces, nor fear of torture, would allow a single word to pass her lips which might inculpate her; and even, by her lively eloquence, confused the judges who examined her. The Pope, being informed of all that passed by Signor Ulysse Moraci, the judge employed in this affair, became suspicious that the beauty of Beatrice had softened the mind of this judge, and committed the cause to another, who found out another mode of torment, called the torture of the hair; and when she was already tied under this torture, he brought before her her mother-in-law and brothers. They began altogether to exhort her to confess; saying, that since the crime had been committed, they must suffer the punishment. Beatrice, after some resistance, said, "So you all wish to die, and to disgrace and ruin our house? ——This is not right; but since it so pleases you, so let it be:"—and turning to the jailors, she told them to unbind her, and that all the examinations might be brought to her, saying, "That which I ought to confess, that will I confess; that to which I ought to assent, to that will I assent; and that which I ought to deny, that will I deny:"—and in this manner she was convicted without having confessed. They were then all unbound; and, since it was now five months since all had met, they wished to eat together that day: but, three days afterwards, they were again divided—the ladies being left in the Corte Savella, and the brothers being transferred to the dungeons of the Tordinona.

The Pope, after having seen all the examinations, and the entire confessions, ordered that the delinquents should be drawn through the streets at the tails of horses, and afterwards decapitated. Many cardinals and princes interested themselves, and entreated that at least they might be allowed to draw up their defence. The Pope at first refused to

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comply, replying with severity, and asking these intercessors what defence had been allowed to Francesco, when he had been so barbarously murdered in his sleep; but afterwards he yielded to allow them twenty-five days' time. The most celebrated Roman advocates undertook to defend the criminals; and, at the end of the appointed time, brought their writings to the Pope. The first that spoke was the advocate Nicolas di Angelis; but the Pope interrupted him angrily in the middle of his discourse, saying, that he greatly wondered that there existed in Rome children unnatural enough to kill their father; and that there should be found advocates depraved enough to defend so horrible a crime. These words silenced all except the advocate Farinacci; who said "Holy Father, we have not fallen at your feet to defend the atrocity of the crime, but to save the life of the innocent, when your holiness will deign to hear us." The Pope listened patiently to him for four hours, and then, taking the writings, dismissed them. The advocate Altieri, who was the last to depart, turned back, and, throwing himself at the feet of the Pope, said, that his office as advocate to the poor would not allow him to refuse to appear in this affair; and the Pope replied that he was not surprised at the part that he, but at that which the others had taken. Instead of retiring to rest, he spent the whole night in studying the cause with the Cardinal di San Marcello—noting with great care the most exculpating passages of the writing of the advocate Farinacci; with which he became so satisfied, that he gave hope of granting a pardon to the criminals; for the crimes of the father and children were contrasted and balanced in this writing; and to save the sons, the greater guilt was attributed to Beatrice; and thus, by saving the mother-in-law, the daughter might the more easily escape, who was dragged, as it were, to the committing so enormous a crime by the cruelty of her father. The

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Pope, therefore, that the criminals might enjoy the benefit of time, ordered them again to be confined in secret. But since, by the high dispensation of Providence, it was resolved that they should incur the just penalty of parricide, it so happened, that at this time Paolo Santa Croce killed his mother in the town of Subiaco, because she refused to give up her inheritance to him. And the Pope, upon the occurrence of this second crime of this nature, resolved to punish those guilty of the first; and the more so, because the matricide Santa Croce had escaped from the vengeance of the law by flight. The Pope returned to Monte Cavallo the 6th of May, that he might consecrate the next morning, in the neighbouring church of S. Maria degli Angeli, the Cardinal Diveristiana, appointed by him to be bishop of Olumbre, on the 3rd of May of the same year, 1599: on the 10th of May he called into his presence Monsignore Ferrante Taverna, governor of Rome, and said to him, "I give up into your hands the Cenci cause, that you may as soon as you can execute the justice allotted to them." As soon as the governor arrived at his palace, he communicated the sentence to, and held a council with, the criminal judge, concerning the manner of death to be inflicted on the criminals. Many nobles instantly hastened to the palaces of the Quirinal and the Vatican, to implore the grace of at least a private death for the ladies, and the pardon of the innocent Bernardo; and, fortunately, they were in time to save the life of this youth, because many hours were necessarily employed in preparing the scaffold over the bridge of S. Angelo, and then in waiting for the Confraternity of Mercy, who were to accompany the condemned to the place of suffering.

The sentence was executed the morning of Saturday, the 11th of May. The messengers charged with the communication of the sentence, and the Brothers of the Conforteria,

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were sent to the several prisons at five the preceding night; and at six the sentence of death was communicated to the unhappy brothers while they were placidly sleeping. Beatrice on hearing it broke into a piercing lamentation, and into passionate gesture, exclaiming, "How is it possible, O my God! that I must so suddenly die?" Lucretia, as prepared and already resigned to her fate, listened without terror to the reading of this terrible sentence; and with gentle exhortations induced her daughter-in-law to enter the chapel with her; and the latter, whatever excess she might have indulged in on the first intimation of a speedy death, so much the more now courageously supported herself, and gave every one certain proofs of a humble resignation. Having requested that a notary might be allowed to come to her, and her request being granted, she made her will, in which she left 15,000 crowns to the Fraternity of the Sacre Stimmate; and willed that all her dowry should be employed in portioning for marriage fifty maidens; and Lucretia, imitating the example of her daughter-in-law, ordered that she should be buried in the church of S. Gregorio at Monte Celio, willed 32,000 crowns for charitable uses, and made other legacies; after which they passed some time in the Conforteria, reciting psalms and litanies and other prayers, with so much fervour that it well appeared that they were assisted by the peculiar grace of God. At eight o'clock they confessed, heard mass, and received the holy communion. Beatrice, considering that it was not decorous to appear before the judges and on the scaffold with their splendid dresses, ordered two dresses, one for herself, and the other for her mother-in law, made in the manner of the nuns—gathered up, and with long sleeves of black cotton for Lucretia, and of common silk for herself; with a large cord girdle. When these dresses came, Beatrice rose, and, turning to Lucretia—"Mother," said she, "the hour of our departure

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is drawing near, let us dress therefore in these clothes, and let us mutually aid one another in this last office." Lucretia readily complied with this invitation, and they dressed, each helping the other, showing the same indifference and pleasure as if they were dressing for a feast.

The Company of Mercy arrived soon after at the prisons of the Tordinona; and while they were waiting below in the street with the crucifix until the condemned should descend, an accident happened, which gave rise to such a tumult among the immense crowd there collected, that there was danger of much disorder. It thus happened; some foreign gentlemen, who were posted at a high window, inadvertently threw down a flower-pot which was outside the window, which falling on one of the brothers of the Order of Mercy, mortally wounded him. This caused a disturbance in the crowd; and those who were too far off to know the cause, took flight, and falling one over the other, several were wounded. When the tumult was calmed, the brothers Giacomo and Bernardo descended to the door of the prison, near which opportunely happened to be some fiscal officers, who, going up to Bernardo, told him that through the clemency of the sovereign pontiff, his life was spared to him, with this condition, that he should be present at the death of his relations. A scarlet mantle trimmed with gold, in which he had at first been conducted to prison, was given him, to envelop him. Giacomo was already on the car, when the *placet* of the Pope arrived, freeing him from the severer portion of the punishment added to the sentence, and ordering that it should be executed only by the hammer and quartering.

The funereal procession passed through the Via dell' Orso, by the Apollinara, thence through the Piazza Navona; from the church of S. Pantalio to the Piazza Pollarola, through the Campo di Fiori, S. Carlo a Castinari, to the Arco de'

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Conte Cenci; proceeding, it stopped under the Palace Cenci, and then finally rested at the Corte Savella, to take the two ladies. When these arrived, Lucretia remained last, dressed in black, as has been described, with a veil of the same colour, which covered her as far as her girdle: Beatrice was beside her, also covered by a veil: they wore velvet slippers, with silk roses and gold fastenings; and, instead of manacles, their wrists were bound by a silk cord, which was fastened to their girdles in such a manner as to give them almost the free use of their hands. Each had in her left hand the holy sign of benediction, and in the right a handkerchief, with which Lucretia wiped her tears, and Beatrice the perspiration from her forehead. Being arrived at the place of punishment, Bernardo was left on the scaffold, and the others were conducted to the chapel. During this dreadful separation, this unfortunate youth, reflecting that he was soon going to behold the decapitation of his nearest relatives, fell down in a deadly swoon, from which, however, he was at last recovered, and seated opposite the block. The first that came forth to die was Lucretia, who, being fat, found difficulty in placing herself to receive the blow. The executioner taking off her handkerchief, her neck was discovered, which was still handsome, although she was fifty years of age. Blushing deeply, she cast her eyes down, and then, casting them up to heaven, full of tears, she exclaimed, "Behold, dearest Jesus, this guilty soul about to appear before thee—to give an account of its acts, mingled with many crimes. When it shall appear before thy Godhead, I pray thee to look on it with an eye of mercy, and not of justice." She then began to recite the psalm *Miserere mei Deus*, and placing her neck under the axe, the head was struck from her body while she was repeating the second verse of this psalm, at the words *et secundum multitudinem*. When the executioner raised the head, the populace saw

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with wonder that the countenance long retained its vivacity, until it was wrapt up in a black handkerchief, and placed in a corner of the scaffold. While the scaffold was being arranged for Beatrice, and whilst the Brotherhood returned to the chapel for her, the balcony of a shop filled with spectators fell, and five of those underneath were wounded, so that two died a few days after. Beatrice, hearing the noise, asked the executioner if her mother had died well, and being replied that she had, she knelt before the crucifix, and spoke thus:—"Be thou everlastingly thanked, O my gracious Saviour, since, by the good death of my mother, thou hast given me assurance of thy mercy towards me." Then, rising, she courageously and devoutly walked towards the scaffold, repeating by the way several prayers with so much fervour of spirit, that all who heard her shed tears of compassion. Ascending the scaffold, while she arranged herself, she also turned her eyes to heaven, and thus prayed: —"Most beloved Jesus, who, relinquishing thy divinity, becamest a man; and didst through love purge my sinful soul also of its original sin with thy precious blood; deign, I beseech thee, to accept that which I am about to shed at thy most merciful tribunal, as a penalty which may cancel my many crimes, and spare me a part of that punishment justly due to me." Then she placed her head under the axe, which at one blow was divided from her body, as she was repeating the second verse of the psalm *De profundis*, at the words *fiant aures tuæ*; the blow gave a violent motion to her body, and discomposed her dress. The executioner raised the head to the view of the people, and in placing it in the coffin placed underneath, the cord by which it was suspended slipped from his hold, and the head fell to the ground, shedding a great deal of blood, which was wiped up with water and sponges.

On the death of his sister, Bernardo again fainted; the

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most efficacious remedies were for some time uselessly employed upon him; and it was believed by all that his second swoon, having found him already overcome and without strength, had deprived him of life. At length, after the lapse of a quarter of an hour, he came to himself, and by slow degrees recovered the use of his senses. Giacomo was then conducted to the scaffold, and the executioner took from him the mourning cloke which enveloped him. He fixed his eyes on Bernardo, and then, turning, addressed the people with a loud voice: "Now that I am about to present myself before the Tribunal of infallible Truth, I swear that if my Saviour, pardoning me my faults, shall place me in the road to salvation, I will incessantly pray for the preservation of his Holiness, who has spared me the aggravation of punishment but too much due to my enormous crime, and has granted life to my brother Bernardo, who is most innocent of the guilt of parricide, as I have constantly declared in all my examinations. It only afflicts me in these my last moments, that he should have been obliged to be present at so fatal a scene: but since, O my God, it has so pleased thee, *fiat voluntas tua.*" After speaking thus, he knelt down: the executioner blinded his eyes, and tied his legs to the scaffold, gave him a blow on the temple with a leaded hammer, cut off his head, and cut his body into four pieces which were fixed on the hooks of the scaffolding.

When the last penalty of justice was over, Bernardo was re-conducted to the prison of the Tordinona, where he was soon attacked by a burning fever; he was bled and received other remedies, so that in the end he recovered his health, though not without great suffering. The bodies of Lucretia and Beatrice were left at the end of the bridge until the evening, illuminated by two torches, and surrounded by so great a concourse of people, that it was impossible to cross the bridge. An hour after dark, the body of Beatrice

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was placed in a coffin, covered by a black velvet pall, richly adorned with gold: garlands of flowers were placed, one at her head, and another at her feet; and the body was strewed with flowers. It was accompanied to the church of S. Peter in Montorio by the Brotherhood of the Order of Mercy, and followed by many Franciscan monks, with great pomp and innumerable torches; she was there buried before the high altar, after the customary ceremony had been performed. By reason of the distance of the church from the bridge, it was four hours after dark before the ceremony was finished. Afterwards the body of Lucretia, accompanied in the same manner, was carried to the church of S. Gregorio upon the Celian Hill; where, after the ceremony, it was honourably buried.

Beatrice was rather tall, of a fair complexion; and she had a dimple on each cheek, which, especially when she smiled, added a grace to her lovely countenance that transported every one who beheld her. Her hair appeared like threads of gold; and, because they were extremely long, she used to tie it up, and, when afterwards she loosened it, the splendid ringlets dazzled the eyes of the spectator. Her eyes were of a deep blue, pleasing, and full of fire. To all these beauties she added, both in words and actions, a spirit and a majestic vivacity that captivated every one. She was twenty years of age when she died.

Lucretia was as tall as Beatrice, but her full make made her appear less: she was also fair, and so fresh complexioned, that at fifty, which was her age when she died, she did not appear above thirty. Her hair was black, and her teeth regular and white to an extraordinary degree.

Giacomo was of a middle size; fair but ruddy; and with black eyebrows: affable in his nature, of good address, and well skilled in every science, and in all knightly exercises. He was not more than twenty-eight years of age when he died.

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Lastly, Bernardo so closely resembled Beatrice in complexion, features, and everything else, that if they had changed clothes the one might easily have been taken for the other. His mind also seemed formed in the same model as that of his sister; and at the time of her death he was six-and-twenty years old.

He remained in the prison of Tordinona until the month of September of the same year, after which time, at the intercession of the most Venerable Grand Brotherhood of the Most Holy Crucifix of St. Marcellus, he obtained the favour of his liberty upon paying the sum of 25,000 crowns to the Hospital of the Most Holy Trinity of Pilgrims. Thus he, as the sole remnant of the Cenci family, became heir to all their possessions. He is now married, and has a son named Cristofero.

The most faithful portrait of Beatrice exists in the Palace of the Villa Pamfili, without the gate of San Pancrazio: if any other is to be found in the Palazzo Cenci, it is not shown to any one;—so as not to renew the memory of so horrible an event.

This was the end of this family: and until the time when this account is put together it has not been possible to find the Marquess Paolo Santa Croce; but there is a rumour that he dwells in Brescia, a city of the Venetian states.

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II.

Mr. Browning on the Santa Croce Case and on Farinacci's Failure in the Defence of the Cenci.

Mr. Robert Browning's latest volume of poems[1] contains one which is perhaps the most valuable poetic illustration of Shelley issued since Walter Savage Landor published, in *The Last Fruit off an Old Tree*, his superb *Five Scenes*. Mr. Browning's *Cenciaja*, as the reading world is now well aware, deals with the episode of Paolo Santa Croce, the matricide, whose crime had so disastrous a bearing on the issue of the Cenci tragedy. The main fact, on which Shelley places no very marked stress, though he introduces it, is that, when the fate of Beatrice and her brother and step-mother still hung in the balance, Paolo Santa Croce killed his mother and made good his escape,—whereon the Pope became absolutely inflexible in his resolution that the three guilty Cenci should die. Mr. Browning details in *Cenciaja* the motives, not only of Paolo Santa Croce, but also of Cardinal Aldobrandino, the Pope's nephew, in incriminating Paolo's brother, Onofrio Santa Croce, and hunting him down to execution; and it is a noteworthy thing that this same Cardinal whose deadly hatred availed to bring Onofrio Santa Croce to a disgraceful death, had also, indirectly, ruined the Cenci family. It was he who benefitted so largely by the continuance of Count Francesco Cenci in his high-priced crimes; and, but for him, "the wickedest man on record," as Landor calls Cenci, would probably have perished before his daughter had been set

[1] *Pacchiarotto and How he Worked in Distemper: with other Poems.* By Robert Browning. London,—Smith, Elder, & Co., 15, Waterloo Place, 1876.

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in the dire necessity of compassing his death. How far Aldobrandino may have been interested in extinguishing the family, of whom only the innocent Bernardo escaped with difficulty, it were hazardous to surmise; but probably his enormous influence with the Pope would be against them. The story[1] of Onofrio and this diabolical dignitary of the Church is within every one's reach, and should be read by all who are interested in those by-paths of history which have fed the imaginations of our greatest poets; but a further comment on the Cenci story, which has not, as far as I know, had any opportunity of finding its way about among Shelley students,—must be here recorded.

Having occasion to write to Mr. Browning on another matter connected with this edition of Shelley's works, I asked him the precise value we were to attach to the terminal *aja* in the title of his poem,—a title, by the way, which is followed by the Italian proverb, *Ogni cencio vuol entrare in bucato*; and I received the following answer.

19, Warwick Crescent, W.

July 27, '76.

DEAR MR. BUXTON FORMAN,

There can be no objection to such a simple statement of fact as you have inserted, if it seem worth inserting. "Fact," it is.—Next:—"aia" is generally an accumulative yet depreciative termination: "Cenciaia" = a bundle of rags = a trifle. The proverb means "every poor creature will be for pressing into the company of his betters," and I used it to deprecate the notion that I

[1] Mr. Browning obtained the facts of the Santa Croce case from a MS. volume of memorials of Italian crime, in the possession of Sir John Simeon, who published from it, in the Series of the Philobiblon Society, a version of the Cenci narrative differing in a few particulars from that which inspired Shelley to write his tragedy.

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intended anything of the kind. Is it any contribution to "all connected with Shelley" if I mention that my "Book" ("The Ring and the Book,")[1] has a reference to the reason given by Farinacci, the advocate of the Cenci, of his failure in the defence of Beatrice? "Fuisse punitam Beatricem" (he declares) "pœnâ ultimi supplicii, non quia ex intervallo occidi mandavit insidiantem suo honori, sed quia ejus exceptionem non probavit ibi—*Prout, et idem firmiter sperabatur de sorore Beatrice si propositam excusationem probasset, prout non probavit.*" That is, she was expected to avow the main outrage, and did not: in conformity with her words "That which I ought to confess, that will I confess; that to which I ought to assent, to that will I assent; and that which I ought to deny, that will I deny." Here is another Cenciaja!

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT BROWNING.

[1] This reference is, of course, not to Mr. Browning's noble poem, *The Ring and the Book*, but to the "old square yellow book," giving the actual details of the "Roman murder case" on which the poem is founded. Mr. Browning has furnished me with an extract of the whole passage bearing on this subject in the pleading of Dominus Hyacinthus de Archangelis in favour of Guido Franceschini; and I find that this "Advocate of the Poor" convicts Farinacci of inconsistency; for he shews that, in one place, that distinguished Doctor had adduced the decapitation of Beatrice as an argument in favour of the extreme penalty, for murder under exceptional circumstances, whereas, in another, he had alleged that she suffered "not because, after lapse of time, she caused one who had designs on her honour to be slain, but because she did not prove her plea in mitigation."

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III.

CAPTAIN MEDWIN'S ACCOUNT OF EMILIA VIVIANI AND "EPIPSYCHIDION."

IN the second volume of Medwin's *Life of Shelley*, is an account of the Lady Emilia Viviani, the authenticity of which I know of no reason for doubting. By way of introduction to the subject, this strange biographer minutely describes, under the mysterious designation of "P——," the Italian "Professore" through whose means Shelley became acquainted with the Viviani: it is unnecessary to quote this description, more especially as Medwin assures us that, in Mrs. Shelley's *Valperga*, "P——" is drawn to the life. He omits to say under what name; but doubtless those who are curious on the subject of this worthless "Professore" will turn both to Medwin's *Life* and to *Valperga*, find out the character, and institute a comparison. Meanwhile, all that need be said of "P——", by way of further preface to Medwin's account of Emilia Viviani, is that his pleasantness and talent commended him to the Shelleys, at whose house in Pisa he was at one time an *habitué*, and that he was "*amico di casa* and confessor to a noble family, one of the most distinguished for its antiquity of any in Pisa, where its head then filled a post of great authority." This personage, the Count Viviani, had, Medwin says, two grown-up daughters by a first marriage, and, in his old age, made a second marriage, with a lady who subsequently induced him to immure his daughters in two convents.

The Professor,[1] [I now extract from Capt. Medwin's *Life*,

[1] Medwin's narrative, in his own words, extends to p. 431. Of the previous portion of the narrative, about "P——" and Count Viviani, I pre-

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Vol. II, pp. 60 to 80] who had known them from infancy, and been their instructor in languages and polite literature, made the *Contessinas* frequent subjects of conversation. He told us that the father was not over rich, owing to his young wife's extravagance; that he was avaricious withal, and did not like to disburse their dowries, which, as fixed by law, must be in proportion to the father's fortune, and was waiting till some one would take them off his hands without a *dote*. He spoke most enthusiastically of the beauty and accomplishments of Emilia, the eldest, adding, that she had been confined for two years in the convent of St. Anna. "Poverina," he said, with a deep sigh, "she pines like a bird in a cage—ardently longs to escape from her prison-house,—pines with *ennui*, and wanders about the corridors like an unquiet spirit; she sees her young days glide on without an aim or purpose. She was made for love. Yesterday she was watering some flowers in her cell—she has nothing else to love but her flowers—'Yes,' said she, addressing them, 'you are born to vegetate, but we thinking beings were made for action—not to be penned up in a corner, or set at a window to blow and die.' A miserable place is that convent of St. Anna," he added, "and if you had seen, as I have done, the poor pensionnaires shut up in that narrow, suffocating street, in the summer, (for it does not possess a garden,) and in the winter as now, shivering with cold, being allowed nothing to warm them but a few ashes, which they carry about in an earthen vase,—you would pity them."

This little story deeply interested Shelley, and P—— proposed that the poet and myself should pay the captive a visit in the *parloir*.

The next day, accompanied by the priest, we came in sight of the gloomy, dark convent, whose ruinous and

ferred to give an abstract, as it is unfitted by its levity of tone for this place; but here Medwin becomes serious; and I have only made a few trifling omissions, which are indicated thus [...].

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dilapidated condition told too plainly of confiscation and poverty. It was situate in an unfrequented street in the suburbs, not far from the walls. After passing through a gloomy portal, that led to a quadrangle, the area of which was crowded with crosses, memorials of old monastic times, we were soon in the presence of Emilia. . . . Emilia was indeed lovely and interesting. Her profuse black hair, tied in the most simple knot, after the manner of a Greek Muse in the Florence gallery, displayed to its full height, her brow, fair as that of the marble of which I speak. She was also of about the same height as the antique. Her features possessed a rare faultlessness, and almost Grecian contour, the nose and forehead making a straight line,—a style of face so rare that I remember Bartolini's telling Byron that he had scarcely an instance of such in the numerous casts of busts which his studio contained. Her eyes had the sleepy voluptuousness, if not the colour of Beatrice Cenci's. They had indeed no definite colour, changing with the changing feeling, to dark or light, as the soul animated them. Her cheek was pale, too, as marble, owing to her confinement and want of air, or perhaps "to thought." There was a lark in the *parloir*, that had lately been caught. "Poor prisoner," said she, looking at it compassionately, "you will die of grief! How I pity thee! What must thou suffer, when thou hearest in the clouds, the songs of thy parent birds, or some flocks of thy kind on the wing, in search of other skies—of new fields—of new delights! But like me, thou wilt be forced to remain here always—to wear out thy miserable existence here. Why can I not release thee!". . . .

Such was the impression of the only visit I paid Emilia; but I saw her some weeks after, at the end of a Carnival, when she had obtained leave to visit Mrs. Shelley, companioned by the abbess. In spite of the contessina's efforts to assume cheerfulness, one might see she was very, very sad; but she

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made no complaint; she had grown used to suffering. It had become her element.

Mrs. Shelley and Shelley frequently went to the convent, to endeavour by their sympathy to console the unhappy girl. Nor were they her only sympathizers: Lady Charlotte Bury's daughters visited her also. Her condition was much aggravated by there being no one within the convent whom she could make a companion or confidante, for her fellow-prisoners were of a low class, and such as a nobleman's daughter could not associate with. Shelley felt deeply the fate of poor Emilia, frequently wrote to her, and received from her in reply, bouquets of flowers . . .

In his correspondence, he says, "But Emilia is not merely beautiful, she has cultivated her mind beyond what I have ever met with in Italian women." She was well-read in the poets of her land, was made for love, had the purest and most sublime conceptions of the master-passion, and without having read the Symposium of Plato, wrote the following Apostrophe to Love, which I have attempted to put in our runic tongue, but which is but a pale reflex of the original.

IL VERO AMORE.

Amore, alma del mondo, amore sorgente di ogni buono, di ogni bello, che sarebbe l'Universo se ad esso mancasse la tua face creatrice? Un orribile deserto! allora, lungi da esso, anco la sola ombra è del buono e del bello, e d'ogni felicità. Di quell' amore io parlo, che impossessandosi di tutto il nostro cuore, dell' intiera

THE TRUE LOVE.

Love! soul of the world! Love, the source of all that is good, of all that is lovely! what would the universe be, failing thy creative flame? A horrible desert. But far from this, it is the sole shadow of all goodness, of all loveliness, and of all felicity. Of that love I speak, that possessing itself of all our soul, of our entire will,

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volontà nostra, ci sublima, e c'inalza al di sopra di ogni altro individuo dell' istessa nostra specie, e tutto energetico, tutto immenso, tutto puro, tutto divino, non ci ispira se non azioni magnanime, e degne de' seguaci di questo soave e onnipotente nume. L'Amante no, non è confuso con gli uomini, non trascina l'anima sua, ma la inalza, la spinge, e la corona di luce, all' sorriso della Divinità. Esso diventa un essere sorprendente, e talvolta incomprensibile. L'Universo, il vasto Universo, non più capace a racchiudere le sue idee, i suoi affetti, svanisce a suoi occhi. *L'anima amante* sdegna essere ristretta, niente può ritenerla. Essa *si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nell' infinito, un mondo, tutto per essa, diverso assai di questo oscuro e pauroso baratro;* assorta di continuo in un estasi dolcissima, è veramente beata. Tutto ciò che non ha rapporto all' oggetto di sua tenerezza, tutto cio che non è quell' oggetto adorato, comparisce un pic-

sublimes and raises one, above every other individual of the same species; and all energetic, all pure, all divine, inspires none but actions that are magnanimous, and worthy of the followers of that sweet and omnipotent deity. The lover! no! he is not confounded with the herd of men, he does not degrade his soul, but elevates, drives on, and crowns it with light at the smile of the divinity. He becomes a supereminent being, and as such altogether incomprehensible. The universe — the vast universe, no longer capable of bounding his ideas, his affections, vanishes from before his sight. The soul of him who loves disdains restraint — nothing can restrain it. It launches itself out of the created, and creates in the infinite a world for itself, and for itself alone, how different from this obscure and fearful den!—is in the continued enjoyment of the sweetest ecstasy, is truly happy. All that has no relation to the object of its

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colo punto a suoi occhi. Ma dove è colui, suscettivole di tale amore? Dove chi possa inspirarlo? Oh amore! Io non sono che amore. Io non posso esistere senza amar. La mia anima, il mio corpo, tutti i miei pensieri ed affetti, tutto ciò che io sono, si trasforma in un solo sentimento di amore—e questo sentimento durerà in eterno. Senza amare, la vita mi divrebbe insopportabile, il mondo un inospito spaventoso e desolato deserto, sparso soltanto di spettri, si terribili alla mia vista che per fuggerli, io mi getterei nella misteriosa ma tranquilla magione di morte. Ah sì, io preferisco le dolce pene dell' amore, i continui palpiti che lo accompagnano, il timore di esso inseparabile, ad una per me stupida calma, ed a tutti i piaceri che posson recare tutte le altre passioni sodisfatte, tutti i beni (se senza amore può essere alcun bene,) che il mondo apprezza e de' quali è avido.

tenderness—all that is not that adored object, appears an insignificant point to his eyes. But where is he, susceptible of such love? Where? Who is capable of inspiring it? Oh love! I am all love. I cannot exist without love! My soul—my mortal frame—all my thoughts and affections, all that which I am, transfigures itself into one sole sentiment of love, and that sentiment will last eternally. Without Love, life would become to me insupportable—the world an inhospitable and desolate desert, only haunted by spectres, so terrible to my sight, that to fly from them, I could cast myself into the mysterious but tranquil abode of death. Ah! yes! I prefer the sweet pains of love, the continual throbbing that accompany, the fear inseparable from it, to a to me stupid calm, and to all the pleasures that can supply the gratification of all other passions, all the goods (if without love there can be any good) which the world prizes and covets.

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Ma quanto tu sei profanato, O Amore! quali oltraggj fanno i figlj della terra al tuo nome divino! Sovente agli affetti i più illeciti, alle azioni le più vituperose, al delitto (oh! attentato esecrando) all' istesso delitto si dà il nome di amore, si osa dire che egli lo ha cagionato. Ahi empj! sacrileghi! inaudita bestemmia! voi non che risentirlo, non comprendete neppure ciò che la parola amore significhi. Amore vuol di virtù, amore ispira virtù, ed è la sorgente delle azioni le più magnanime, della vera felicità. Amore è un fuoco, che brucciando non distrugge, una mista di piacere e di pena, una pena che porta piacere, un' Essenza eterna, spirituale, infinita, pura, celeste. Questo si è il vero, il solo amore, quel sentimento che soltanto può riempire intieramente il vuoto dell' anima, quel vuoto orribile peggior della morte. Ogni altro sentimento da questo dissimile, da questo men puro, non merita il sacro nome di amore, e gli empj

But how art thou profaned, O Love! what outrages do not the children of the earth commit in thy name divine! Often and often to affections the most illicit, to actions the most vile and degrading, to crime —ah! execrable iniquity! when even to crime itself they give the name of Love, and dare to tax it with the commission of crime! Alas! unheard-of blasphemy. Impious and sacrilegious that ye are, you not only feel it not, but comprehend not even what the word Love signifies. Love has no wish but for virtue — Love inspires virtue—Love is the source of actions the most magnanimous, of true felicity—Love is a fire that burns and destroys not, a mixture of pleasure and of pain, a pain that brings pleasure, an essence eternal, spiritual, infinite, pure, celestial. This is the true, the only Love,—that sentiment which can alone entirely fill up the void of the soul—that horrible void, worse than death.

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che lo profanano, e lo denigrano, saranno puniti da questo potentissimo nume, et meriteranno l'eterna perdizione. Ove l'anima che è sensibile, che cerca amore, si trova una volta nell' abisso della desolazione, e ove il cuore sia deserto di questo dolce fuoco, o trovi infidele l'oggetto di sua tenerezza, quest' anima miserabile cerchi, (almeno io gli il consiglio) cerchi almeno, il suo rifugio nella tomba, e si pascoli di esso, come dell' ultima consolazione!

Every other sentiment dissimilar from this, than this less pure, deserves not the sacred name of Love; and they who impiously profane and defile it, shall be punished by that most mighty of Divinities, and shall merit eternal perdition. Where the soul that is feelingly alive seeks for love, and finds itself in the abyss of desolation, and where the heart is divested of this sweet fire, or finds faithless the object of its tenderness, — that miserable soul, let it seek (at least I so counsel it), let it seek, I say, its refuge in the tomb, and feed upon it as its last consolation.

This admirable piece of eloquence was perhaps the source of the inspiration of the *Epipsychidion*,[1] a poem that combines the pathos of the *Vita Nuova* of Dante with the enthusiastic tenderness of Petrarch. The *Epipsychidion*, is the apotheosis of love—Emilia a mere creature of his imagination, in whom he idealized Love in all its intensity of passion. His feeling towards the Psyche herself, was, as may be seen by Letter LX of his correspondence, a purely Platonic one. He calls the *Epipsychidion* a mystery, and says "as to real flesh and blood, you know that I do not deal in those articles.

[1] The quotation on the title-page of *Epipsychidion* is, it will be observed, the passage italicized at p. 425.

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Expect nothing human or earthly from me," &c. His love for Emilia, if such it can in the general acceptation of the term be called, was of the kind described in the Symposium by Socrates .... Shelley thought that to pass from one state of existence to another, was not death, but a new development of life; that we must love as we live, through all eternity; and that they who have not this persuasion, know nothing of life, nothing of love; that they who do not make the universe a fountain whence they may literally draw new life and love, know nothing of one or the other, and are not fated to know anything of it. The words are not his, but they shadow out what I heard him better express.

This poem, or rhapsody, incomprehensible to the general class of readers, from a defect in the common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats, fell dead from the press. I believe that not a copy of it was sold, not a single review noticed it—one of the many proofs that the public ear is deaf to the finest accords of the lyre.

But Emilia's term of bondage was about to expire; she was affianced to a man whom she had never seen, and who was incapable of appreciating her talents or her virtues. She was about to be removed from the scenes of her youth, the place of her birth, her father on whom she doted, and to be buried in the Maremma. The day of her wedding was fixed, but a short respite took place for a reason mentioned in a letter of Shelley to Mrs. Shelley (from Ravenna), where he says, "Have you heard anything of my poor Emilia? from whom I got a letter the day of my departure, saying that her marriage was deferred on account of the illness of her *sposo!*" and in another letter he expresses what, in the fragment of *Ginevra*, too well typified the fate of that unfortunate lady, the poor sacrificed Emilia,—his fears as to what she was destined to suffer. The sacrifice was at length completed, and she was soon

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as much forgotten as if she had never existed—though not by Shelley.

I am enabled to detail the consequences of this ill-starred union, to finish her biography. Some years after, P——... made his appearance at the capital of Tuscany, where I then was.... He did not forget our old acquaintanceship at Shelley's, and haunted me like an unquiet spirit. One day, when at my house, he said mysteriously,—"I will introduce you to an old friend—come with me." The coachman was ordered to drive to a part of the city with which I was a stranger, and drew up at a country house in the suburbs. The villa, which had once boasted considerable pretensions, was in great disrepair. The court leading to it, overgrown with weeds, proved that it had been for some years untenanted. An old woman led us through a number of long passages and rooms, many of the windows in which were broken, and let in the cold blasts from "the wind-swept Apennine;" and opening at length a door, ushered us into a chamber, where a small bed and a couple of chairs formed the whole furniture. The couch was covered with white gauze curtains, to exclude the gnats; behind them was lying a female form. She immediately recognized me—was probably prepared for my visit—and extended her thin hand to me in greeting. So changed that recumbent figure, that I could scarcely recognize a trace of the once beautiful Emilia. Shelley's evil augury had been fulfilled, she had found in her marriage all that he had predicted; for six years she led a life of purgatory, and had at length broken the chain, with the consent of her father; who had lent her this long disused and dilapidated *Campagna*. I might fill many a page by speaking of the tears she shed over the memory of Shelley,—but enough—she did not long enjoy her freedom. Shortly after this interview, she was confined to her bed; the seeds of *malaria*, which had been

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sown in the Maremma, combined with that all-irremediable malady, broken-heartedness, brought on a rapid consumption.

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn.

The old woman, who had been her nurse, made me a long narration of her last moments, as she wept bitterly. I wept too, when I thought of Shelley's Psyche, and his *Epipsychidion*.

In giving the foregoing narrative, I have of course followed the original text as a rule, only correcting a few obvious printer's or writer's blunders. For example, Emilia figures in the original *Life* as having features of "an almost German contour," whereas the context clearly shews that *almost Grecian* was intended. That would doubtless be a printer's error; but I suspect Medwin is responsible for translating *slancia* into *lances* instead of *launches* (page 425). Such mistakes as these, one is bound to correct, especially when, as in the present case, the book abounds with blunders of all kinds. The Italian composition of Emilia is frightfully mangled, mainly, I suspect, by the printer; and I have done my best to set that to rights.

H. B. F.

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IV.

Mrs. Shelley's Account of Emilia Viviani.[1]

[Pisa] 29th December, 1820.

Well, good-night; tomorrow I will finish my letter and talk to you about our unfortunate young friend, Emilia Viviani.

It is grievous to see this beautiful girl wearing out the best years of her life in an odious convent where both mind and body are sick from want of the appropriate exercise for each. I think she has great talent, if not genius—or if not an internal fountain how could she have acquired the mastery she has of her own language, which she writes so beautifully, or those ideas which lift her so far above the rest of the Italians. She has not studied much, and now hopeless from a five years' confinement, everything disgusts her, and she looks with hatred and distaste even on the alleviations of her situation. Her only hope is in a marriage which her parents tell her is concluded, although she has

[1] This extract is from a long and very interesting letter; but there is no more in it about Emilia Viviani than was given in Leigh Hunt's *Correspondence* (Vol. I, p. 160). As the extract appears there, it opens with the passage "He [Shelley] has written a long poem [*The Epipsychidion*], which no one has ever read, and like the illustrious Sotherby. gives the law to a few distinguished Blues of Pisa." The pardonable mis-spelling of Sotheby's name is Mrs. Shelley's, as I find from the original letter, placed at my disposal by Mr. Townshend Mayer; but I am glad to be enabled, from the same source, to remove the imputation laid upon Mrs. Shelley by Thornton Hunt, of comparing her husband to Sotheby. The passage immediately preceding the word *he* relates to one Rosini, the "ringleader" of a "gang" who had attempted to "put down" the Improvvisatore Sgricci at the Pisa Theatre. A great portion of the letter is descriptive of Sgricci's doings; and this assailant, Rosini, is characterized as "a speaker of folly in a city of fools,—one *che mai parla bene di chicchessia—o di quei che vivono, o dei morti.*" Immediately after this quotation comes the passage "He has written" &c.; there is no allusion to Shelley anywhere near it; and it is absolutely clear and certain that "he" was not Shelley, as indicated in the *Correspondence*, but Rosini,—the long unread poem not the *Epipsychidion*, but something that is probably still unread.

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never seen the person intended for her. Nor do I think the change of situation will be much for the better, for he is a younger brother, and will live in the house with his mother, whom [*sic*] they say is *molta secante*. Yet she may then have the free use of her limbs; she may then be able to walk out among the fields, vineyards, and woods of her country, and see the mountains and the sky, and not be as now, a dozen steps to the right, and then back to the left another dozen, which is the longest walk her convent garden affords, and that, you may be sure, she is very seldom tempted to take.

* * * * *

Adieu my dear Hunt

Most affectionately yours

MARINA

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V.

On certain words used by Shelley in the Poems printed in the present Volume.

It will be convenient to follow the plan, adopted in Vol. I, of adding a few notes on words used by Shelley, either remarkably or variably. Besides some few words not dealt with in the Appendix to Vol. I, I have noted, in preparing the present volume, whatever has seemed to me to bear upon what was said in the previous one, in regard to any particular word.

Desart—Desert.—The evidence of the present volume does not seriously affect the suggestion made in the appendix to Vol. I, that Shelley's object was to distinguish *desart*, noun, from *desert*, adjective. Had *desart* been used as an adjective in his own Livorno edition of *The Cenci*, it would have seemed unlikely that he had any such idea of distinction; but it is not. In *Prometheus Unbound*, the noun is usually spelt *desart*; and there are cases of the adjective being spelt *desert*, as in *desert hearts*, Act II, Scene IV, line 55. In Act IV, Scene I, line 76, we have *desart year*, which would be against my theory if it were certainly and deliberately Shelley's; and in Act II, Scene I, line 12, we have *desert*, noun. But the poem is full of errors, as Shelley himself declared; and I should be disposed to set these inconsistencies down to Peacock and the printer,—the printer primarily, as committing them, and Peacock secondarily as failing to notice them. The expression *desart rocks* in the eighth stanza of the *Ode to Liberty* is, I presume, equivalent to *rocks of the desart*; so that, assuming it to be Shelley's own spelling, it is still not the adjective spelt with an *a*. In *Œdipus Tyrannus* we have

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the noun *desart* (Act II, Scene II, line 128); but I have not noted the adjective.

Ætherial—Ethereal.—The word *Ætherial* occurs in *Prometheus Unbound*, Act IV, Scene I, lines 223 and 530, and *æther* in Act II, Scene IV, line 96. In Act I, line 275, we get *ethereal*; but it will be remembered that that orthography occurs only in *Mont Blanc* and *Rosalind and Helen* of the poems printed in Vol. I, and that there are strong reasons for thinking that Peacock saw that, as well as *Prometheus*, through the press. I have not noted the word in *The Cenci*; but *ethereally* occurs again in *Epipsychidion*, another poem not revised by Shelley. I am so far convinced that Shelley's choice rested on the orthography *ætherial* that I have changed the spelling accordingly in *Epipsychidion* (line 77) and in the case cited in *Prometheus Unbound*.

Aërial—Aerial.—Both forms occur pretty frequently, as will be seen by the changes specified in the foot-notes. My intention has been to give *aërial* invariably in the text, because I know from manuscript sources that Shelley used that orthography, and because it has a practical value to commend it to him or any one else.

Crystalline.—This favourite word was used with two distinct pronunciations, according to the necessities of scansion. It is usually to be pronounced *crystàlline*, unmistakably, as in *Prometheus Unbound*, Act III, Scene III, line 159,—in the *Ode to the West Wind*, Stanza III, line 3,—and in numerous other instances which will occur to any one familiar with Shelley's poetry. But in Act IV, Scene IV, of *Prometheus Unbound*, line 433,

> And crystalline, till it becomes a wingèd mist,

the word is obviously to be accented on the first syllable, —the line being utterly unrhythmic otherwise. The same

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pronunciation is necessary in line 118 of *A Vision of the Sea*,—

Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,

where Shelley's usual accentuation of the word would be impossible. It is curious to note that, occasionally, an *h* is introduced into this word, and also into *crystal*, thus, *chrystal*: I do not doubt that this *lapsus* was Shelley's own, and arose from a momentary confusion of derivations, —the root in his mind being that of another favourite word of his, *chrysolite*. Instances of this mis-spelling have been recorded in the foot-notes, as at page 249 of this volume.

Cope.—In *A Vision of the Sea*, Shelley uses the word *cope* in what seems to me indubitably its old sense of *stroke* (*coup*), when he speaks of the billows inconstantly shining in "the cope of the lightning" (line 24, page 282); but, though there is no difficulty about finding dictionary authority for this sense of the word, I have not succeeded in lighting on the writer in whose works Shelley found it and took a fancy to it. The cognate verb occurs in Shakespeare; but not, as far I know, the noun in that sense. Milton uses *cope* as equivalent to *covering* or *vaulting*, as in *the starry cope*, but not in the sense of *stroke*; nor can I find it in Chaucer or Spenser, though it may be there. I cannot imagine that Shelley adopted it merely on finding it accidentally in a dictionary; and some one deeply learned in the works of our elder writers would probably be able to say at a moment's notice where the word is to be found in the sense in question.

Griding.—In *Prometheus Unbound*, Act III, Scene I, line 48, we get another old word, but this time one whose introduction into Shelley's vocabulary is by no means difficult to account for. "The thunder of the fiery wheels griding the winds" is just such an expression as might occur in Milton or in Spenser, both of whom use the word

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gride as an equivalent for to cut or pierce through. In *Paradise Lost*, for instance, we have (Book VI, line 329)

> The griding sword with discontinuous wound,

and there is no need to seek further. It is regretworthy that this expressive word should have passed so nearly out of sight; but there is one living poet who, in addressing Shelley, has preserved the tradition of this word which Shelley reintroduced: in *Sordello*, Mr. Browning says to his great predecessor,

> The thunder-phrase of the Athenian, grown
> Up out of memories of Marathon,
> Would echo like his own sword's griding screech
> Braying a Persian shield,—the silver speech
> Of Sidney's self, the starry paladin,
> Turn intense as a trumpet sounding in
> The knights to tilt—wert thou to hear!

Thwart.—The adjective *thwart*, a very unusual one, occurs in *Prometheus Unbound*, Act II, Scene II, line 90,

> And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,

and Professor Baynes (*Edinburgh Review*, April, 1871) is probably right in classing it among words adopted from Shakespeare: he says,—"Now, although the adjective *thwart* occurs in Spenser and Milton in the literal sense of transverse, we believe its figurative use to express what is morally perverse, a cross-gained crooked temper, is, amongst the Elizabethan writers, peculiar to Shakespeare. It is indeed used in the same sense by Gavan Douglas and older Scotch writers, a sense exactly equivalent to the Scotch word *thrawn;* but Shelley undoubtedly derived the word from Shakespeare."

Continents.—In *Epipsychidion* (lines 399 and 400, page 382) we have the expression

> Like lightning with invisible violence
> Piercing its continents,

in which the word *continents* is employed in a very unusual

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manner. "Dr. Johnson," says Professor Baynes, "in noticing the unusual meaning of the word *continent* as that which holds or contains, suggests that the word in this sense is peculiar to Shakespeare, and although this is not the case, Shakespeare often so uses it, and it must have been from him that Shelley derived it."

Forbid.—Another word which Professor Baynes very reasonably assigns to the influence of Shakespeare is *forbid*, as used in *The Sensitive Plant*, Part III,

> The Sensitive Plant like one forbid
> Wept,

where the word would have no meaning if we attempted to attach the usual sense to it. It comes in "after a description of the poisonous blight and killing vapours that had blasted the beauty of the garden"; and Professor Baynes is doubtless right when he says,—"The phrase, 'like one forbid,' here means, like one prayed against, accursed, like one under a malediction, the word *forbid* in this sense being derived from Shakespeare's use of it in *Macbeth*."

Griff.—This German word occurs in *The Sensitive Plant*, Part III, line 113; and I suspect it was arbitrarily introduced into Shelley's vocabulary direct from the German during his studies of that language. It is possible that it exists, without my being aware of it, in some of our earlier writers; but I have been unable to discover it. The nearest approach to *griff* (grasp, touch, grip) which I have come upon is the curious expression *griff-graff*, which Bailey gives as an obsolete equivalent for *by hook or by crook*.

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END OF VOL. II.

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